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INSIDE TIMES2

Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren

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Westminster threat to veto Scottish gender recognition law

Oliver Wright, Mark McLaughlin

Ministers have threatened to block a new Scottish law that will allow trans people to self-declare their gender after the controversial legislation was passed at Holyrood yesterday.

In an unprecedented move, Alister Jack, the Scottish secretary, said that the government was prepared to veto the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill and prevent it from gaining royal assent. He warned that it threatened the safety of women and children.

The move would set the Scottish and UK parliaments on a collision course for the second time in recent months and is expected to end up before the Supreme Court.

Under the legislation passed by the Scottish parliament yesterday, people who have reached 16 and live in Scotland will be able to apply for a birth certificate declaring their legal gender without a diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

Senior government figures at Westminster fear that the law would have profound effects in England as well as north of the border. They said it could allow biologically male Scottish inmates in English jails, including rapists, to demand to be placed in women's prisons, and lead to gender tourism.

Amid cries of "shame on you" by feminist campaigners, the bill was passed by 86 votes to 39 in the Scottish parliament. Jack said that ministers would consider the first use of Article 35 of the Scotland Act to veto the legislation, as it would have an "adverse effect on the operation of the law" in areas reserved for Westminster. "We share the concerns that many people have regarding this bill, and in particular the safety issues for women and children," he said.

Shona Robison, the Scottish social justice secretary, said that it would be "very disappointing if the UK government didn't respect Scottish democracy".

Bill passes amid dissent, page 14

KENSINGTON PALACE



Songs of praise **The Princess of Wales recorded a message yesterday at Westminster Abbey for a Christmas Eve carol service in memory of the late Queen. Page 7**

Got a cough or cold? Stay away from grandparents

As flu cases rise, families are told to avoid vulnerable relatives if they have symptoms

Eleanor Hayward Health Correspondent
Max Kendix

Anyone with a cough or cold should avoid celebrating Christmas with their grandparents to protect them from a surge in winter viruses, health officials have said.

As families prepare for the most open festive season since the start of the pandemic restrictions, the message is: if you feel unwell, stay at home alone.

Hospital admissions for flu are now at the highest level for five years, and health chiefs fear that family gatherings will put elderly people at risk. NHS bosses said that this Christmas could be their "darkest to date" as hospitals come under "enormous pressure" from rising flu, Covid and strep A infections.

The Department of Health blamed lockdown restrictions during the pandemic, combined with the recent cold snap, for the flu surge. "Covid restrictions kept flu at bay in previous seasons," a spokesman said, "but the ending of these and plunging temperatures in recent weeks have resulted in increased socialising indoors, which is why both viruses are on the rise."

Steve Barclay, the health secretary, urged people over 50 and healthcare workers to have their free flu jabs, adding: "We can all draw on the spirit of Christmas and make sure our vulnerable relatives, friends and neighbours are getting their immunity topped up to prevent them from serious illness."

Hospital chiefs said that the difficulties in dealing with the resurgence of viruses were being "aggravated" by strikes by nurses and paramedics, who announced yesterday another two days of walkouts next month.

The UK Health Security Agency has urged anyone with symptoms to stay at home over Christmas, advising them to wear a mask in enclosed spaces, such as trains or supermarkets. "It is important to avoid contact with other people if you are unwell to help stop infections spreading over the Christmas and new year period," the agency said.

NHS England said hospital admissions for flu last week were 60 times

Continued on page 4

Skip starters for a perfect festive feast, says Nigella

Valentine Low, George Sandeman

Nigella Lawson has never been an enemy of indulgence. But the food writer who was once photographed with salted caramel sauce dripping down her face has now declared that people should not serve starters with Christmas dinner because it will leave them feeling "like a bloated wreck".

Lawson, 62, called it "madness" to serve appetisers for Christmas dinner given the huge size of the meal. Eating more, she said, was not necessarily the path to the greatest happiness. "I think people have got used to the idea that adding more and more and more makes it better, when it doesn't — it probably makes people not appreciate the few things that make it into a feast anyway," she said.

Her dismissal of the Christmas starter is a reversal of the approach she took in the preface to her first cookery book, *How to Eat*, in 1998, when she said: "I have nothing to declare but my greed."

Speaking on *The News Agents* podcast, hosted by the former BBC presenters Emily Maitlis and Jon Sopel, she said: "I don't know why people do starters for Christmas lunch. I never have — that seems a madness. But I also think there is a way in which for many people it does become a sort of obscene overindulgence. So, people are not eating because it is pleasurable. They're eating because somehow people feel they should be eating nonstop."

Asked if some people ate too much out of gluttony, she said: "Yes, but they can go too far too. You want to feel full up and grateful that you feel full up, but you don't want to be a bloated wreck."

Lawson also has firm opinions on the most important part of the Christmas meal: it is the roast potatoes.

Budget-friendly Christmas, page 13

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Today's highlights

8am **Mark Serwotka**, general secretary of the PCS union
11am **Matt Chorley**'s big quiz of the political year with panellists including **Angela Rayner**, of Labour, and the Tory **Dehenna Davison**
1.45pm **Ruth Davidson** chats to **the Rev Sally Hitchiner**, right, from St Martin-in-the-Fields, London
4pm Times Radio Drive with **Ayesha Hazarika**
8pm **Ed Vaizey** talks to the music promoter **Vince Power** about representing acts from Paul McCartney to Nirvana



TIMES RADIO
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TODAY'S EDITION

Rail fares to rise by 5.9%
The cost of a rail season ticket and other fares will go up from March by 5.9 per cent, the biggest increase for 11 years, despite an intervention by ministers to keep rises below inflation. Fares are normally calculated with RPI, which is 12.3 per cent. **Page 6**

Russia recovery 'will be 30 years'
President Putin has weakened the Russian economy and military to such an extent during the Ukraine invasion that it may take up to 30 years for Moscow to recover its superpower status, a senior British government source has said. **Page 12**

Evri accused of stealing parcels
Homeowners with security cameras on their properties have recorded footage of employees of the courier company Evri, which operated under the name Hermes until March, tossing packages at their doors and allegedly taking their items. **Page 15**

COMMENT
The sensitivities of some sex offenders now trump those of women in Scotland
ALEX MASSIE, PAGE 31

Congo villagers flee ethnic clash
Villagers in Kishishe and Bambo in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo tried to hide behind a school and others fled to the bush when the mainly Tutsi M23 group attacked last month after clashes with a Hutu militia. The death toll was 131. **Page 38**

$250m bail for crypto boss
Sam Bankman-Fried, 30, the co-founder and former head of FTX, will be freed on a bond of $250 million while he awaits trial on fraud charges over the failure of the crypto exchange, a court in New York ruled. He must remain at his parents' home in California. **Page 41**

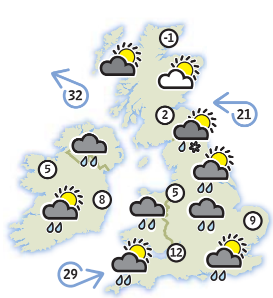
City knock out Liverpool in cup
Manchester City beat Liverpool 3-2, knocking the Carabao Cup holders out of the competition in the fourth round. City led on three occasions and claimed a quarter-final place when Nathan Ake headed in Kevin de Bruyne's cross at the far post. **Pages 64-66**

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THE WEATHER



Mainly cloudy with spells of rain but drier and cooler over Scotland.
Full forecast, page 56

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Ministers fear Biden's plans will ruin British car trade

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Ministers have privately accused the Biden administration of undermining "free and fair trade" with the UK in a deepening transatlantic row over green subsidies.

The government fears that the £4.3 billion car export market to the US could be destroyed because the US plans to subsidise companies investing in net-zero products made there but not those made in the UK.

In public, ministers have refrained from criticising the Biden administration for the plan, but concerns have been raised in Washington.

Kemi Badenoch, the trade secretary, has written to her opposite number in Washington to express her alarm, and Rishi Sunak is expected to raise the matter directly with the White House.

Under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which was passed by Congress in August, companies that invest in net-zero technology in the US will be eligible for up to $360 billion in subsidies to promote green growth and stimulate the economy.

British ministers fear the subsidies will put non-American companies at a disadvantage, particularly in sectors such as electric cars.

The subsidies are worth $7,500 for each vehicle sold and also include tax credits to promote carbon capture, clean hydrogen and investment in clean energy technologies and to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions — all areas in which the UK is aiming to develop industrial expertise.

In her letter to Katherine Tai, the US trade representative, Badenoch said the US subsidies would "undermine UK-US trade and investment flows and weaken our trusted supply chains".

She added: "They also undermine our shared goals to promote free and fair trade internationally," and called for "personal clarification" on how the US intended to address the British government's concerns. "This will harm multiple economies across the world and impact global supply chains in batteries, electric vehicles and wider renewables, which are all essential to our move to net zero. The UK expects to be and should, as the closest of US allies, be part of any flexibilities in the implementation of the IRA."

Badenoch also raised concerns with both Wally Adeyemo, the deputy Treasury secretary, and Gina Raimondo, the commerce secretary. Badenoch has discussed the subject with the prime minister, who is expected to raise the subsidies directly with the White House.

British concerns mirror those of France. President Macron has warned of possible "conflict" between the US and the EU, which has threatened retaliation unless the US modifies its proposals.

The White House has insisted that the legislation has "provisions that will contribute to the growth of the clean energy sector globally".

Mike Hawes, chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), said the UK and US automotive industries had a longstanding and productive relationship.

"Measures that support free and fair trade between us should be encouraged, rather than those that seek to protect individual markets," he said. "The SMMT is in dialogue with government to ensure that UK-made electrified vehicles, batteries and critical components continue to compete fairly in the US market and support the administration's target."

Churches keep millions fed and warm

Kaya Burgess
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Nearly three million people sought help from food banks and warm spaces provided by churches and other religious groups this year, according to a survey.

The poll by Savanta found that 38 per cent of adults had needed assistance or support this year because of the cost of living crisis, with 24 per cent turning to family, 14 per cent to friends, 8 per cent to their local council, 7 per cent to charities and 5 per cent to religious institutions.

The Church of England, which commissioned the survey of 2,061 people, said that about 2.6 million adults across the UK sought aid from faith groups. Out of those, 60 per cent said they had received free food, 50 per cent said they had received discounted food and 40 per cent said they had taken advantage of a warm space.

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, the Church of England's spokesman on welfare, said: "Churches have been providing a lifeline to people struggling to balance their household budgets and provide for their families, through food banks and food clubs and other forms of hospitality, for many years.

"The cost of living crisis has seen churches step up this support, with many providing warm spaces through the Warm Welcome campaign this winter for people struggling to heat their homes."

The Church of England's figures suggest that its parishes were responsible for about 33,000 "social action" projects, from food banks and night shelters to debt counselling services.

Earlier this month the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the fear that the decline in church attendance would threaten its capacity to provide such projects in future. Asked about census figures showing that fewer than half of people in England and Wales identified themselves as Christian, he said: "It is bad news. It is worrying for the health of the nation because from our different churches and faiths come by far the largest commitment to social wellbeing, the social cement between the bricks of society.

"The loss of all that without anything coming in its place is really bad."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Fears over Christmas flu surge

higher than this time last year, with people aged 75 and above and children under five the most at risk. The latest figures, for December 18, show 2,300 patients in hospital with flu, compared with 27 on the same day last year. Admissions have jumped by two thirds in the past week and are on track to exceed the 2017-18 flu outbreak, one of the worst in recent decades, when nearly 30,000 people died.

Health chiefs have also sounded the alarm about rising cases of Covid and record strep A infections. The number of admissions for Covid-19 has nearly doubled in a month, with 8,646 patients in hospital with the virus, the highest figure since October. There have been 960 cases of invasive strep A since September, causing 94 deaths, with 39 of these in people aged 75 and above.

Saffron Cordery, the interim chief executive of NHS Providers, said: "Trust leaders are expecting this Christmas to be one of their darkest to date. As they work hard to mitigate the impact of strike action, they are also having to contend with an incredibly long list of other serious challenges. This flu season is looking far more severe compared to recent years before the pandemic."

More ambulance walkouts, pages 8-9

Behind the story

This time last year most of us were either self-isolating after catching the newly emergent Omicron variant or hiding indoors to avoid it (Eleanor Hayward writes).

The previous year the nation was in lockdown and Boris Johnson effectively cancelled Christmas. Covid restrictions gave the flu virus no chance to spread.

Now it is coming back with a vengeance. Hospital admissions for flu are 60 times higher than they were last December.

In all, 1,939 hospital beds a day were taken up by flu patients last week, up two thirds on the week before. In the same week last year, just 32 beds a day were occupied by people with flu.

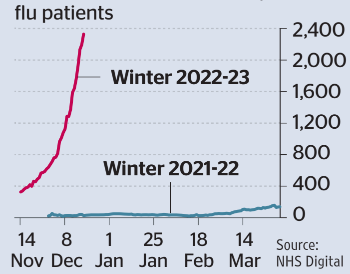
While the illness is not dangerous for most people, it can be severe in those with weak immune systems, including the elderly and young children. Some require critical care including ventilators.

NHS data shows 149 patients a day are being admitted to intensive care with flu; this time last year it was just two a day. More flu patients than Covid patients are now in intensive care for the first time since the pandemic began. Rates are highest in the over-85s, followed by children under the age of five.

This flu season looks likely to be particularly deadly, with hospital admissions higher than at any point since January 2018. That winter, one of the worst seasons on record, flu killed about 30,000 people.

Surging flu cases

Beds in acute trusts taken by flu patients



Source: NHS Digital

Now you see her… then you won't

Fans are suing a studio for $5m because an actress in the trailer was cut from film, writes **Keiran Southern**



The trailer for Yesterday shows a musician played by Himesh Patel serenading Ana de Armas's character on a chat show; she was edited out of the film, to the disappointment of two fans who are demanding $5 million for deceptive advertising

"Why she had to go, I don't know, she wouldn't say," goes the famous Beatles refrain.

Now, after two litigious film-goers asked themselves a similar question, Universal Studios is embroiled in an extraordinary legal battle that could cost it millions of dollars in damages. The studio is being sued for cutting an actress from a film even though she appears in the trailer.

Ana de Armas is seen in the trailer for *Yesterday*, Danny Boyle's 2019 film about a struggling musician who discovers that no one but him has heard of the Beatles and exploits that fact to become a superstar.

However, much to the disappointment of at least two audience members, the Cuban-Spanish actress's scenes ended up on the cutting-room floor. Conor Woulfe and Peter Michael Rosza accused Universal of deceptive marketing after they paid $3.99 to rent the film, demanding $5 million in damages for themselves and others affected.



The studio sought to have the case thrown out but this week a US federal judge refused. Stephen Wilson found that the trailer qualified as commercial speech and was subject to California's false advertising law and unfair competition law.



"Universal is correct that trailers involve some creativity and editorial discretion, but this creativity does not outweigh the commercial nature of a trailer," Wilson wrote in his ruling. "At its core, a trailer is an advertisement designed to sell a movie by providing consumers with a preview of the movie."

The ruling is a blow to Universal's lawyers, who argued that studios had long packed their trailers with material that was cut from the finished product. They pointed to *Jurassic Park* — another Universal production — which had a trailer consisting entirely of footage that was not in the film.

The lawyers also warned that classifying trailers as "commercial speech" could leave studios open to a flurry of lawsuits from disappointed viewers arguing that a film did not live up to expectations. In his ruling, however, Wilson said that the false advertising law applied only when a "significant portion" of "reasonable consumers" could be misled. The case will now proceed to a motion for class-action certification.

De Armas, 34, who appeared in the James Bond film *No Time to Die* last year, was shown as a prominent character in the trailer for *Yesterday*. After passing off the Beatles' songs as his own, the musician, played by Himesh Patel, becomes world-famous and, during an appearance on James Corden's chat show, is asked to write another track on the spot. He serenades De Armas's character, who is sitting on the sofa next to him, with *Something*. Richard Curtis, who wrote the screenplay, said the scene was cut because audiences did not like Patel's character betraying his primary love interest, played by Lily James.

Mitchell Epner, a New York lawyer who advises clients on entertainment law, suggested the judge could be trying to circumvent California's strong anti-Slapp (strategic lawsuits against public participation) statutes, which are designed to deter intimidatory lawsuits by making those who brought the action liable for the other side's legal costs. By refusing to dismiss the case, he ensured that Woulfe and Rosza were not saddled with Universal's legal fees.

The ruling may also be an attempt to encourage the two sides to seek a settlement that will save time and money. "I would imagine that Universal will now try to settle the case, because they don't want to have to spend on it," Epner said. "But if they can't settle it, they may decide that this precedent is potentially bad enough for them that they'll invest a million dollars to fight it all the way to the end to try to get this precedent overturned."

This is not the first such case. In 2011 a fan filed a lawsuit in Michigan alleging that the trailer for *Drive*, which starred Ryan Gosling, was misleading. An appeal court dismissed the case.

Don't believe anything you see in a movie teaser

Kevin Maher
Comment

Everyone sympathises with the Ana de Armas fans who were so perturbed by her absence from the final cut of Danny Boyle's turgid musical drama *Yesterday* that they sued the studio for false advertising.

De Armas was in the trailer, they argued, and therefore it was reasonable to assume that she would be in the film. Reasonable, that is, if you've only ever watched the trailer for *Yesterday*. Because either as an art form or a marketing tool, any trailer is a lie.

A trailer offers hints and mood rather than excerpts and actual previews. Think of the trailer for *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. It featured nothing more than Arnold Schwarzenegger's T-800 being assembled on a futuristic production line in an ominous full-length sequence that was entirely omitted from the movie. It was an ingenious blast of hype, but its connection to the film is less than negligible. Before that there was the *Psycho* trailer, featuring Alfred Hitchcock wandering through the Bates Motel set, reflecting on the scenes that he had shot there — "The bathroom, you should've seen the blood!" No Hitchcock fans, however, contemplated suing the studio.

Hollywood is littered with superfluous trailer junk.

Remember Tom Cruise flying a helicopter into a jack-knifing truck in the spot for *Mission: Impossible — Fallout*? Not in the film.

Or what about the startling moments from the *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* trailer, including the lead actress Felicity Jones delivering the film's best line, "This is a rebellion, isn't it? I rebel!" Absent too.

And let's not forget the "money shot" moment from the *Spider-Man: Homecoming* trailer, featuring Peter Parker and Iron Man flying through the sky in tandem. It sums up everything that's thrilling and punch-the-air cool about the Marvel Universe. And was it in the final film? Not a chance. Time to call the lawyers?

Was H just a red herring? Line of Duty set for return

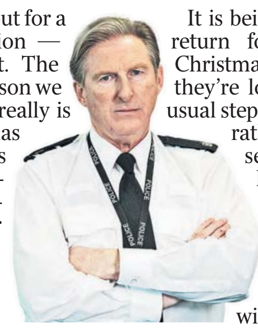
John Reynolds

The award-winning BBC police drama *Line of Duty* is to return for a three-part special to address "unfinished business".

The show, which was first screened in 2012, follows detectives of AC-12, tackling institutionalised corruption in the police force. It stars Martin Compston as Steve Arnott, Vicky McClure as Kate Fleming and Adrian Dunbar as Ted Hastings.

The programme has won several awards for best drama series, and was named the BBC's most watched drama of the century after the series six finale drew 12.8 million viewers in May last year. The series, created and written by Jed Mercurio, came to an apparent conclusion last year. The final episode ended with the unmasking of "H", the leader of an undercover corruption syndicate. Many fans, however, appeared to be underwhelmed by the final episode.

A source told The Sun: "Viewers weren't satisfied with the ending of series six and were crying out for a more sensational conclusion — now Jed can deliver that. The question is whether the person we were led to believe was H really is the villain that AC-12 has been hunting or if it was another nemesis." According to the source, "there's also a theory another, darker puppet master is at work".



Adrian Dunbar as Ted Hastings in the BBC drama

It is being claimed the show will return for three episodes over Christmas 2024. "The fact that they're looking at taking the unusual step of making three episodes rather than the usual six or seven is a reflection of just how special this is for the show," the source said. "There was a very strong feeling, particularly among fans, that there was unfinished business with *Line of Duty*."

Appearing on *Good Morning Britain* this week, McClure discussed the potential for the return of the show. She said: "I speak to the lads all the time, we'd all love to, we're all game — Martin's in nine shows! It's busy, I'm sure we'll get there." McClure added that she was in a "busy" Whatsapp chat with her co-stars.

Dunbar has previously told The Times: "[There] is a big appetite for more *Line of Duty*. It could be three or four episodes. I don't think there's going to be six, for some reason."

HENRY NICHOLLS/REUTERS



Well red A heavy covering of cloud did little to deter the assorted revellers and pagans who were keen to welcome the sunrise on the winter solstice at Stonehenge

Quintagram® No 1506

Solve all five clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Tavern (3)

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2 Grammatical unit (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Large city in Missouri (2,5)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Act of departing or emptying (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 In fact (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	A	C	C	C
E	I	I	I	L	L	L	L
N	N	N	O	O	S	S	S
T	T	T	U	U	U	V	Y

Solutions MindGames in Times2
Cryptic clues every day online

County lines woman

A woman who ran a county lines drug operation and boasted of her luxury lifestyle on Snapchat has been jailed for three years. Birmingham crown court was told that Henna Ashraf, 25, ran the so-called Mase line between her home in Birmingham and Torquay. When she was stopped in 2020, the police found a phone that had sent a text message to 40 people offering drugs for sale. She was convicted of supplying crack cocaine and heroin.

Passengers face biggest rail fare increase for 11 years (and that's with a price cap)

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Rail passengers face the biggest fare rises in 11 years despite a government intervention to cap increases below inflation.

Mark Harper, the transport secretary, said that from March the cost of a season ticket and other fares would rise by 5.9 per cent, in line with average earnings.

The increase, ministers said, was 6.4 percentage points lower than if it had been calculated on the basis of the retail prices index (RPI) measure of inflation. Fares are normally calculated using RPI, which is 12.3 per cent.

The increase is still higher that the 2-3 per cent pay increases offered to many public sector workers and passenger groups said that the rises were unacceptable given the widespread disruption to services.

The cost of an annual season ticket from Reading to London will increase from £5,044 to £5,342 — a rise of nearly £300. The cost of a super off-peak return from London to Edinburgh will rise by about £10 to £174.

About 45 per cent of fares on Britain's railways are regulated by the Westminster, Scottish and Welsh governments. They include season tickets on most commuter journeys, some off-peak return tickets on long-distance journeys and flexible tickets for travel around big cities.

Analysis of data for standard-class fares in Britain, from the regulator Office of Rail and Road, shows that would be the largest annual rise since a 6.2 per cent jump in 2012.

Ministers used the announcement to increase pressure on rail unions, saying that limiting fare rises would require increased taxpayer support. They said that the industry was facing "serious financial difficulty" and so the unions "must agree to cost-saving reforms".

They added that taxpayers had contributed £31 billion to the railways during the pandemic.

Labour called the increase in the cost of train travel "savage" while passenger groups were also critical.

David Sidebottom, director of the watchdog Transport Focus, said: "No one likes prices going up. In our latest research, less than half of passengers think the railway performs well on delivering value-for-money tickets.

"After months of unreliable services and strike disruption, it's clear that too many passengers are not getting a value-for-money service."

Norman Baker, of the lobby group Campaign for Better Transport, said: "We must be grateful for small mercies: it is clear that the increase could have been much worse. But this increase stands in stark contrast to the situation with fuel duty, which was cut this year after being frozen for years.

"What the government ought to do is freeze rail fares to help passengers and encourage people on to the railways."

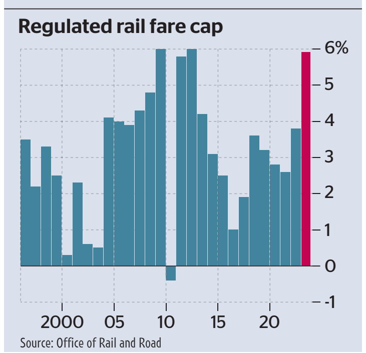
Harper described the price cap as the "biggest ever government intervention in rail fares", adding: "It has been a difficult year and the impact of inflation is being felt across the UK economy. We do not want to add to the problem. This is a fair balance between the passengers who use our trains and the taxpayers who help pay for them."

Between 2004 and 2013 the government increased rail fares every year above the rate of inflation in an attempt to reduce the amount of state subsidy required by the railways. Since then, fares have increased annually in line with inflation.

Ministers said they were also extending the previous delay in increasing prices until March 5, meaning that passengers will be able to buy season tickets at the present rate until then.

Louise Haigh, the shadow transport secretary, said that the rises were unacceptable given the level of service on the railways. "This savage fare hike will be a sick joke for millions reliant on crumbling services," she said. "People up and down this country are paying the price for 12 years of Tory failure."

Annual increase



Recession more likely as revised figures show seasonal shrinkage

Arthi Nachiappan
Economics Correspondent

A recession by the end of the year is even more likely after statisticians said that the economy shrank by more than originally thought in the third quarter.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) revised down its figure for growth in gross domestic product, the main measure of output, to a contraction of 0.3 per cent in three months to September. Its original estimate was for a 0.2 per cent contraction. The change for its final reading of GDP for the quarter reflects downgrades to the statistics office's estimates of production and construction output.

Darren Morgan, director of economic statistics at the ONS, said: "Our revised figures show the economy performed slightly less well over the last year than we previously estimated, with manufacturing and electricity generation notably weaker. Household incomes continued to fall in real terms, albeit at a slower rate than in the previous two quarters while, taking account of inflation, household spending fell for the first time since the final Covid-19 lockdown in the spring of 2021." The services sector, which accounts for most UK output, grew by 0.1 per cent over the third quarter but output in the manufacturing sector fell by 2.5 per cent, with falls recorded in all 13 of its sub-sectors.

Real GDP, which is output after adjusting for inflation, is now 0.8 per cent below its level in the final quarter of 2019, revised down from a previous estimate of 0.4 per cent below pre-pandemic levels.

Households have faced a deterioration in the value of their pay over the past year because of inflation. The ONS said real households' disposable income dropped by 0.5 per cent in the third quarter, marking the fourth consecutive quarter of decline.

The UK is expected to meet the criterion for a formal recession, defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth, by the end of the year. Figures for the final quarter, which covers October to December, will be published by the statistics office in February.

The latest official estimates, published last week, show that the economy grew by 0.5 per cent in October but economists believe this is unlikely to stop Britain sinking into recession. The modest rebound in GDP came after contractions of 0.1 per cent in August and 0.6 per cent in September.

Recession "to be worst in G7", page 41

Crucifix necklace loved by Diana going under the hammer

Emma Yeomans

A necklace worn by Diana, the late Princess of Wales, in the 1980s is expected to fetch up to £120,000 at auction.

The Attallah Cross, which the princess famously paired with an Elizabethan-style Catherine Walker gown for a London charity gala in 1987, has been listed for auction in January.

The pendant, made by Garrard, the first official crown jeweller which was responsible for the upkeep of the Crown Jewels from 1843 to 2007, will lead Sotheby's annual Royal and Noble sale, which begins on January 6 and ends on January 18.

The statement crucifix pendant is embossed with gold, silver, amethyst and diamonds, but little is known about its design.

Diana wore the pendant to a charity ball in 1987 in aid of Birthrights, a charity working to protect human rights during pregnancy and childbirth, of which she became patron in 1984.

The piece reflected her lifelong relationship with Garrard, which adapted the Spencer Tiara for her wedding day and made the sapphire engagement ring she selected in 1981.

In her last public appearance, Diana wore a diamond and south sea pearl piece by Garrard which became known as the Swan Lake necklace.

The Attallah Cross was owned by the former group chief executive of Asprey and Garrard, the late Naim Attallah, who would often lend it to Diana.

It was later passed on to his son Ramsay Attallah, who said: "Princess Diana and my father were friends and I remember that she often came to see him at the historic Garrard store on Regent Street, where his office was, and she would ask to borrow the pendant on several occasions. She really loved the piece."



The princess wore the Attallah Cross to a charity gala in 1987

He added Diana was the only person to wear the necklace, telling Vogue magazine: "When I was growing up, we'd always have it on the table for Christmas lunch, but it was never worn by anyone other than Diana and it hasn't been seen in public since she died."

Kristian Spofforth, head of jewellery at Sotheby's London, said: "Jewellery owned or worn by Princess Diana very rarely comes on to the market, especially a piece such as the Attallah Cross, which is so colourful, bold and distinctive. To some extent, this unusual pendant is symbolic of the princess's growing self-assurance in her sartorial and jewellery choices at that particular moment in her life.

"We are confident this unique 1920s piece of jewellery, with such an exceptional provenance and only ever worn by the princess herself, will attract the attention of a wide variety of bidders, including royal and noble jewellery collectors, as well as fans of the princess keen to share part of her history."

While the origin of the design is unknown, it is thought to have been a special commission or even a replica of a historical piece, Spofforth said.

KIRSTY O'CONNOR/PA





Princess praises late Queen's inspiring legacy at Abbey carols

Valentine Low

The Princess of Wales's carol service at Westminster Abbey, which will be broadcast on Christmas Eve, will feature a special performance by a Ukrainian children's choir from west London.

The princess invited the choir from St Mary's Ukrainian School after meeting some of them during a visit to the cultural centre earlier this year.

The service, attended by the King and Queen as well as the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the royal family, is dedicated to the memory of the late Queen. The princess will say in her introduction to the service: "This Christmas will be our first without Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

"Her Majesty held Christmas close to her heart, as a time that brought people together and reminded us of the importance of faith, friendship and family, and to show empathy and compassion.

"This year, we've invited hundreds of inspiring individuals to the service. Those who showcase the power of connectedness and community values, allowing us to continue Her Majesty's tradition of recognising and thanking those who have gone above and beyond to support others.



"Her Majesty leaves with us an incredible legacy and one that has deeply inspired many of us. This year's carol service is dedicated to her and to all those who are sadly no longer with us."

She will add: "Take time to slow down and celebrate with family and friends all the wonderful things that make Christmas so special."

In a letter to the school's headmistress, Inna Hryhorovych, the princess invited the choir to sing at her service, held for the first time last year. She told her the school was "a lifeline for the whole community" and said: "The children's choir at St Mary's is a wonderful example of how it is possible to find pockets of happiness, meaning and comfort during difficult times." As well as the choir's performance of *Away in a Manger*, the service features the Westminster Abbey choir, Craig David, Alexis Ffrench, and a duet by Alfie Boe and Melanie C. Readings are given by the Prince of Wales, Dame Kristin Scott Thomas and Nicola Adams.

The service, which was filmed last week, recognises the efforts of individuals, families and communities across the UK to support those around them.

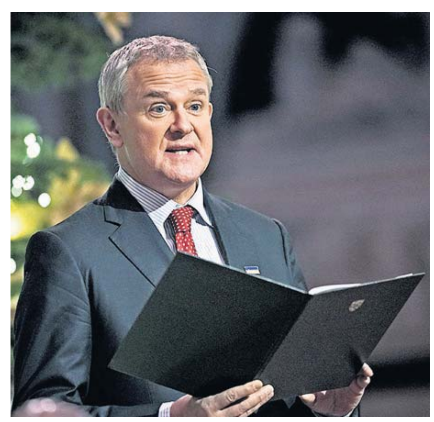
It features as part of *Royal Carols: Together At Christmas*, a programme narrated by Catherine Zeta Jones which will air at 7pm on Christmas Eve on ITV1. At last year's event the princess, who was then Duchess of Cambridge, won praise for playing a piano accompaniment during the song *For Those Who Can't Be Here*.

The musician Tom Walker, best known for his single *Leave a Light On*, sang the lyrics to the song while playing an acoustic guitar. He said that she "absolutely nailed" her part and that the performance was "hands down one of the greatest experiences of my life".

The princess had piano lessons for about three years until she was 13 before shifting her ambitions to the flute and singing. She had rehearsed the piece nine times with Walker and had practised the accompaniment alone before the pre-recorded performance.

Walker wrote the song in memory of his grandfather who died during the pandemic, which meant his family had been unable to be at his side to say goodbye. The lyrics remembered those who also died at the same time and paid tribute to those who went to great lengths to help others during lockdown.





The St Mary's Ukrainian School choir sing Away in a Manger at the Westminster Abbey carol service, to be shown on Christmas Eve. Participants included the former boxer Nicola Adams, Alfie Boe and Melanie C, and the actor Hugh Bonneville

Get set for longer and deeper

Kat Lay Health Editor
Eleanor Hayward Health Correspondent

Ambulance workers will walk out again next month unless the government agrees to hold talks on pay.

Unison, one of the unions involved, said that workers in London, Yorkshire, the North West, North East and South West would strike for 24 hours on Wednesday January 11 and Monday 23.

This week ambulance crew members of Unison walked out for 12 hours. Next month's strikes will be longer and more extensive, involving call centre staff and patient transport services.

Unite said that its ambulance staff members in Wales had voted for industrial action, promising strike dates in the new year. GMB union members in Wales walked out this week and will do so again next Wednesday.

And Unison will again ballot about 13,000 staff in ten English NHS trusts over strike action in the new year, after turnout in the last round failed to reach the legal threshold.

Christina McAnea, Unison's general secretary, said: "It's only through talks that this dispute will end. No health workers want to go out on strike again in the new year."

She said a war of words during Wednesday's strikes, in which Steve Barclay, the health secretary, said that unions had made a conscious decision to inflict harm on the public by taking action "was not the health secretary's finest hour".

She added: "Neither was it a particularly smart move for Steve Barclay to falsely accuse health unions of failing to deliver a national emergency cover plan. The secretary of state knew full well life and limb cover arrangements were being agreed locally by ambulance managers and unions.

"It's time Steve Barclay stopped with the insults and fibs and called the unions in for proper talks about improving NHS pay. Speeding up next year's pay review body process won't solve the current dispute, which is about the pitiful amount the government gave health workers this year."

Yesterday Barclay continued to rule out negotiations on pay, however.

Figures from NHS England show that at least 2,774 ambulance staff went on strike, although the London, North East and Yorkshire services did not submit any data.

On Wednesday 4,851 appointments and planned procedures were cancelled as a result of industrial action, which also included some Liverpool hospital staff.

NHS England figures showed that ambulance delays outside hospitals were already by far the worst on record before paramedics went on strike.

There has been a dramatic rise in ambulance handover delays. Last week one in four patients arriving at A&E were stuck in ambulances for at least an hour, up from one in six the previous week. Last winter only one in ten patients had to endure such waits and before the pandemic less than one in 30 had to wait for more than an hour.

Ambulances are wasting about 6,700 hours a day in England outside A&Es, equivalent to 280 ambulances being out of use. Overall, 28,105 patients, 41 per cent of the total, had to wait at least 30 minutes last week to be handed over, and 16,379 waited at least an hour.

NHS leaders said that the health service cannot "go on coping" with a winter of strikes, as they called on unions and ministers to get back round the negotiating table.

Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, said the health service "coped as well as could be expected" on Wednesday. He said there had been fewer 999 calls while more patients relied on GPs and 111.

But he said that the strike was likely to lead to "pent-up demand" and urged both sides to consider their stance.

"We coped as best we could … but it's incredibly important to recognise that we cannot go on coping with industrial action in the NHS because each time it happens, there are direct consequences, but also all sorts of knock-on effects," he told the Today programme on BBC Radio 4.

"We will repeat the call, which is to trade unions and to the government to step away from rhetoric and step towards negotiation. We can't drift into more and more industrial action."

Saffron Cordery, interim chief executive of NHS Providers, said the new strike dates "will add even more pressure to an already challenging situation". She said: "The potential to continue to escalate action and for prolonged, co-ordinated strikes by more health unions in January if talks — including on pay — don't take place is incredibly worrying. There are no winners in this situation. Serious talks must take place between health ministers and unions — and fast."

Health service reform, letters, page 34

Plan to give staff a pay boost early

George Grylls

Health workers will receive a pay rise earlier than usual next year, under government plans to end strikes paralysing the NHS.

Under the present system, the NHS pay review body makes its recommendations in April but wages do not go up until August.

In an attempt to end the strikes, Steve Barclay, the health secretary, wants to "speed up the process". A source told The Daily Telegraph that he recognised staff were "feeling the pinch", adding: "Steve is very keen for this to go ahead at pace and not be dragged out as it has been in the past."

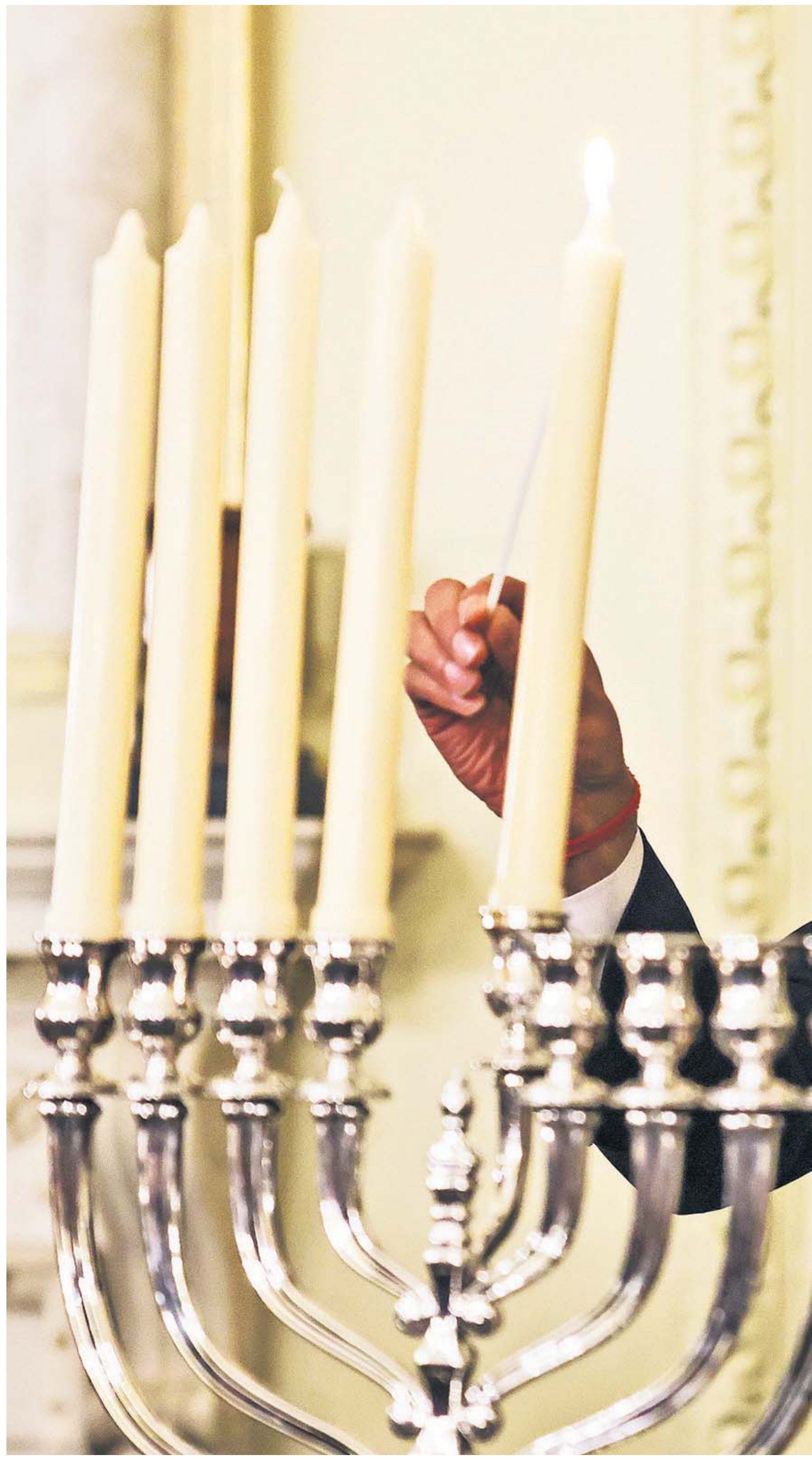
About 30,000 NHS appointments and operations in England have been cancelled in the past week after ambulance crews and nurses walked out.

The Royal College of Nursing, which is campaigning for a 19 per cent pay increase, is expected to announce further strike dates in January.

The government is refusing to allow wage increases above the £1,400 recommended by the pay review body.

Yesterday Barclay sought to counter criticism from unions, which accused him of being "completely disingenuous" for saying that striking workers were putting patients at risk.

"I'm so grateful for the work ambulance workers and other NHS staff do," he said. "My door is always open to talk to trade unions about concerns around working conditions. We have an independent pay review body — which the unions campaigned to set up — and we will continue to defer to that process to ensure decisions balance the needs of staff and the wider economy."



Union chiefs deny Barclay emergency cover claims

Fariha Karim

Unions have described the health secretary as "disingenuous" for claiming that they are refusing to assist with national contingency plans during ambulance staff strikes.

Steve Barclay has claimed that GMB, Unite and Unison, the three unions holding walkouts, have refused to provide national emergency cover plans to the department of health, making measures such as troop deployment difficult. However, the unions have said that they had never agreed to such a measure because each regional service has its own specific needs.

This week, Sharon Graham, general secretary of the Unite union, challenged the prime minister to Christmas Day peace talks to avert the crisis.

Sharon Graham, Unite

Sharon Graham's first brush with authority and wages came in the form of a row with her parents over pocket money at nine. She took issue with her older brother's greater share of pocket money, saying, "Hang on a second, that means he can have more sweets. Why is he allowed more sweets? I just thought it was outrageous! It was a massive triumph for me — and I got to go to bed half an hour later. I had a good win."

By the time she was 17, she worked as a silver service waitress who led a protest against agency workers being paid less than staff. Born in Hammersmith, west London, to a Geordie father and an Irish mother, Graham, 54, initially wanted to be a journalist but joined the Transport and General Workers' Union while working as a secretary in an estate agents. The union went on to become Unite after a merger, and she continued to rise through the ranks.

In August last year Graham succeeded the former general secretary Len McCluskey in a victory backed by Momentum, the hardline group that supported Jeremy Corbyn. She is the first woman to hold the role, and has a salary of £81,000 and benefits of £11,000.

At Unite, she is a fan of "leverage", a strategy one senior Tory described as "sinister". It is used against particularly aggressive employers that are unwilling to negotiate, and where the union is not in a position to use traditional methods of industrial action to persuade the employer to come to the bargaining table.

The union will look at the company as a whole and consider its future clients and business interests. "We don't want strongly worded press releases — we need to have campaigns that the employer knows can have an effect on their business," she said.

The tactic was examined by the Carr review in 2014, which found that Unite was not breaking industrial action law.

Graham's husband, Jack Clarke, with whom she lives in Hammersmith, is head of bargaining and dispute support at Unite. They live with their son, Thomas.

Christina McAnea, Unison

Glasgow-born McAnea had dreamed of becoming a war reporter but was rejected from a graduate journalism course at City University, and ended up working in unions instead.

Her first activist role was with the Communist Party at the age of 15, partly in rebellion against the Catholic teachings of her Glasgow school. The daughter of a dinner lady, McAnea, 63, began working at 15 to support her three siblings and her mother after her alcoholic father left the family.

Ten years after joining the party, she left because "if I wanted to achieve real change, I couldn't do it through the Communist Party".

Having worked in the civil service, the NHS and retail before going to university at the age of 22, she joined unions, first working as a tribunals officer for GMB in Glasgow then in London. She went on to the National and Local Government Officers' Association, one of the trade unions that would eventually merge to form Unison, where she has been since 1993.

When she stood as a candidate to replace Dave Prentis, who had been its general secretary for 20 years, she was described by some as the "right-wing" candidate.

She conceded that this



Christina McAnea addresses striking ambulance workers in London on Wednesday

ambulance strikes in weeks

RORY ARNOLD/NO10 DOWNING STREET



Britain united Rishi Sunak held a reception at Downing Street this week at which he lit a candle to mark Chanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights. The number of candles lit increases by one on each of the eight days. The festival celebrates the rededication during the second century BCE of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Sunak told his guests that "as a proud Hindu" he had always been struck by the similarities with the festival of Diwali

could have been because "you're always going to get people who think the answer to everything is a strike and that we should never compromise, but as a negotiator, you know compromise is part of what you do up to a point." More recently, she said: "We don't want to bring our low-paid workers out to strike, but if there's no alternative, what else can people do?"

In January last year she became the first woman to lead the UK's largest union, receiving a salary of £132,000 including benefits of £13,000.

McAnea has described one of the best moments of her career as being her work organising for the 2014 NHS staff strike, the first in the health service in over 20 years. She said it was "a fantastic moment, and I don't mean this because strikes are a great achievement.

"You could argue that having ended up with a strike is not a great achievement, but it's still exciting to be involved in a big national dispute."

McAnea lives in Streatham, south London, with her husband, Robert Hill, a former Labour councillor in Lambeth, and has two adult children.



Gary Smith, GMB

Having described Nicola Sturgeon's administration as "utterly incompetent" and the health secretary Steve Barclay as "utterly dishonest" and "deluded", Gary Smith, 55, is not one for mincing his words.

The straight-talking Scot came into his post as general secretary last year with a pledge to "shed the practices and cultures that have blighted us in recent times", after a report by Karon Monaghan KC exposed "endemic" sexual harassment, cronyism and misogyny at the union.

He joined the GMB as a 16-year-old apprentice gas fitter before becoming a shop steward, so to lead the union was, to him, "the honour of my life".

He was previously secretary of GMB Scotland, living in Paisley with his girlfriend, Charlotte Gregory, a GMB Scotland communications officer. In November, as strike action began to shift up a gear, Smith appeared to suggest that the current wave might be just the beginning, saying: "We have a thousand fires lit across this country, and we need a thousand more."

He is described as politically moderate: he is in favour of a £15 per hour living wage, but has also called on Labour to back fracking, hydrogen and nuclear fuel instead of bowing to the "bourgeois environmental lobby" and sacrificing workers' jobs in the UK.

Smith has also criticised attempts by Sir Keir Starmer to move the party back towards the centre, and described as a "huge own goal" the party's ability to turn "a Tory transport crisis into a Labour story" when the former shadow transport secretary Sam Tarry, who gave unauthorised interviews from picket lines, was sacked.

He succeeded Tim Roache, who quit abruptly in 2020 amid allegations of sexual misconduct, which Roache denies. Smith's total package last year was £135,000, including £26,000 in pension contributions and a car allowance of £5,000.

Without funding we will collapse, say pharmacies

Kat Lay

England's network of community pharmacies is "close to collapse", with serious consequences for millions of patients, industry leaders have warned.

In a letter sent to Steve Barclay, the health secretary, they cautioned that "as a sector we are now at a fork in the road", and urged him to "make a critical choice about the role you want pharmacies to play".

The letter, co-ordinated by the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), which represents over 11,000 NHS community pharmacies in England, calls for more investment in the sector and for funding cuts to be reversed.

It was also signed by the chief executives of the four largest pharmacy chains in England, including Boots and Lloyds, and heads of other national representative bodies.

The government has said it wants to make more use of community pharmacies in England to ease pressures on GP surgeries and accident and emergency departments. But the letter argues that funding cuts over the past seven years makes this goal unrealistic.

It warns: "Many pharmacies are now dispensing at a loss and facing a serious cashflow crisis which we fear if not addressed, will rapidly move towards many permanent closures. We fear that once they start, closures will be hard to stop, as the sector is now so fragile other pharmacies would struggle to pick up the slack.

"We are deeply concerned that this will put medicine supply at risk — with serious consequences for the millions of people who rely on dispensed prescriptions every year." Some 418 community pharmacies closed last year, while only 308 opened. NHS England figures show that there were 24,601 unplanned temporary pharmacy closures in the year to October.

The letter says: "As a sector we share your ambition for community pharmacies to deliver more support and clinical services for patients."

They suggest a fully funded "Pharmacy First" service akin to that operating in Scotland, where community pharmacies act as the first port of call for treating common conditions such as sore throats, earaches, cold sores and urinary tract infections, and can refer patients to other NHS services if required. Pharmacies could also offer "a wider range of services that support medicine optimisation, long-term conditions, prevention and health inequalities".

Pharmacy funding has remained at £2.592 billion a year since 2017-18, which the PSNC said equated to a 30 per cent cut in real terms. It cited workforce issues that have seen locum pharmacy costs jump by 80 per cent in a year, as well as increases in energy bills and inflationary pressures, and drug market and pricing issues.

Janet Morrison, chief executive of the PSNC, said: "This critical part of the NHS is facing the same crippling challenges as the rest of the health service.

"Years of funding cuts have taken their toll, leaving many pharmacies close to collapse."

Leyla Hannbeck, chief executive of the Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies, who also signed the letter, said it was "essential" for the health secretary to act urgently.

A Department of Health and Social Care spokesman said: "Our five-year deal with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee provides £2.6 billion a year to the sector, enabling pharmacies to provide services such as taking referrals from NHS 111 online, administering blood pressure checks, and managing routine oral contraception without a GP prescription. On top of this, we have announced a further £100 million investment in the sector to help support the NHS.

"There is good access to community pharmacies, with 80 per cent of people living within 20 minutes' walking distance of one, and twice as many pharmacies in more deprived areas."

Strep A kills more children as fever cases hit new high

Eleanor Hayward

Five more children have died from strep A in England in the past week, and cases of scarlet fever are the highest on record.

The UK Health Security Agency said 21 children in England have died from invasive group A strep infections, when the bacterium get into the bloodstream.

Two children in Wales and one in Northern Ireland have also died, taking the UK's death toll in children this winter to 24. In total there have been 94 strep A deaths in England since September 12, most in older adults.

There have been 27,486 cases of scarlet fever, which is usually a mild illness caused by the strep A bacterium, up from just 7,750 this time last week, a figure the UKHSA said is the highest since records began in 1982.

There have been nearly as many cases as in the whole of 2017-18, which was the last bad winter for strep A, when there were 30,768 scarlet fever cases in a year.

Scarlet fever symptoms are often flu-like, including a high temperature, and a rash appears 12 to 48 hours later. It looks like small, raised bumps and starts on the chest and stomach, then spreads. A white coating also appears on the tongue which peels, leaving the it red, swollen and covered in bumps, often called "strawberry tongue".

During the 2017-18 outbreak of strep A, 27 children died.

Air passengers face delays as passport staff begin walkout

Andrew Ellson
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Families returning home for Christmas are set to be hit hardest by delays at passport control as a strike by Border Force workers begins today.

About 1,000 members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union who staff passport booths have walked out in a dispute over pay and conditions. The disruption will last until New Year's Eve.

The union confirmed yesterday that no last-minute offer on pay had been made so the strikes will take place at six airports — Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff and Glasgow — every day until the end of the year, except on December 27.

The government has warned the two million travellers set to arrive at the airports in the festive period to expect "serious disruption" as the army, civil servants and volunteers man border desks.

Airports have urged passengers to use electronic passport gates to avoid the worst delays, but the Home Office does not allow children under 12 to go through e-gates, meaning they and their families will be stuck in the longest queues.

The strike could not come at a worse time for travellers, with today set to be the busiest day of the year at Britain's airports. There are fears that delays in checking passports could lead to overcrowded arrival halls and passengers being held on planes, disrupting subsequent departures.

No flights have been cancelled but airports say some could be stopped at the last minute to ease capacity if overcrowding develops.

There are also concerns that overcrowding could escalate quickly if there is bad weather or some other unexpected event. "There is no resilience in the system," one airport official said.

The Home Office would not say how many servicemen would stand in for Border Force officials or what proportion of travellers usually use e-gates.

Steve Dann, the head of Border Force operations, said there are "robust plans" to limit the impact of the strikes but he admitted that the "contingency workforce will not be able to operate with the same efficiency as our permanent workforce". He added that the agency cannot predict the extent of the delays.

The one piece of good news for travellers is that a 72-hour strike by ground handlers employed by Menzies at Heathrow airport was suspended after a new pay offer.

Yesterday, Mark Serwotka, the general secretary of the PCS union, was unrepentant about the potential chaos and urged people affected by disruption to vent their anger at the government.

He said: "The government could stop these strikes tomorrow if it puts more money on the table. Like so many workers, Border Force employees are struggling with the cost of living crisis. They are desperate."

The worst disruption could be at Heathrow, the UK's busiest airport, where 579 flights are due to land today. An estimated 10,000 passengers will be on flights arriving there before 7am.

The first arrival, a British Airways service from Cape Town, is expected at 4.45am.

Passengers who eventually make their way through the airport will tomorrow face further disruption in their efforts to get home as rail workers stage a Christmas Eve strike.

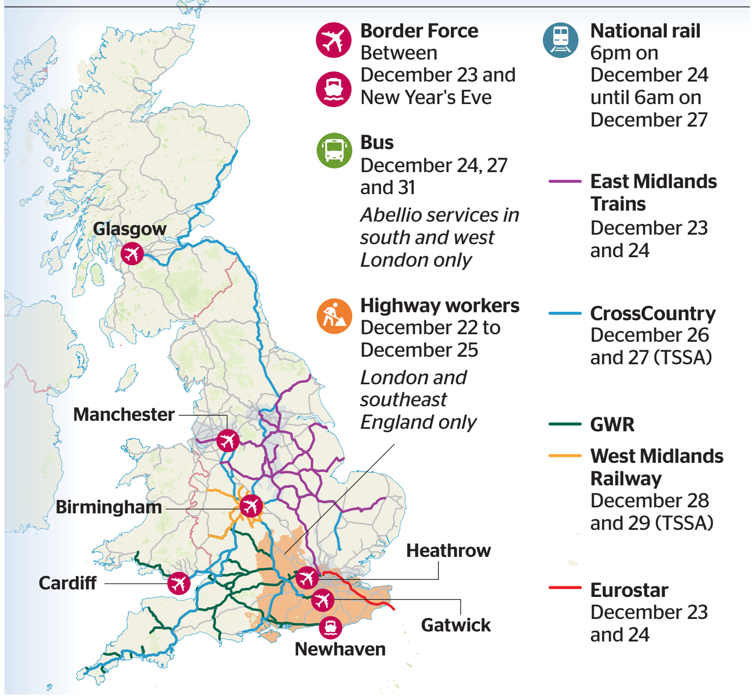
The walkout by members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union will cause train services to stop running at about 3pm.

Those travelling by road also face heavy congestion. The AA said today would be the busiest day on the roads this week, with an estimated 16.9 million journeys being made across the UK. A further 16.6 million journeys are expected on Christmas Eve.

Journey times are set to be about 14 per cent longer than in the same period last year, according to the transport analytics firm Inrix. Congestion is expected on the M25, the M60 near Manchester, the M6 in northwest England and the M40 in Oxfordshire.

Julia Lo Bue-Said, chief executive of the travel agent group Advantage Travel Partnership, said: "It is a real shame that travellers are facing such disruption at this time of year, especially as it is the first Christmas when people should be able to travel freely after the pandemic. Anyone travelling over the next few days will have spent a lot of money to have a Christmas break abroad and these strikes will impact their plans. We encourage all parties to resolve these disputes as quickly as possible to ensure that everyone travelling can enjoy their well-earned Christmas and New Year breaks."

Travel disruption





Crowds of passengers at Waterloo station in London yesterday as rail workers

Q&A

What's happening? From today, 1,000 Border Force staff will walk out at six of Britain's biggest airports: Birmingham, Cardiff, Gatwick, Glasgow, Heathrow and Manchester (Andrew Ellson writes).

They will strike every day until the end of the year, except for December 27, in a dispute over pay and conditions. Two million people are due to fly into the affected airports during the stoppages.

What does that mean for travellers? The government has warned that the strikes could cause "serious disruption" for passengers arriving in the UK, with long delays to get through passport control. Suella Braverman, the home secretary, has urged people to "think carefully" about their travel plans because of the expected problems. People departing from Britain and international transfers should not, in theory, be delayed because they do not need to travel through passport control.

What is being done to minimise disruption? The military, civil servants and volunteers are being trained to check passports at the border, although the government was unable to confirm exactly how many of the 1,000 missing staff will be replaced. The Public and Commercial Services Union, which represents the Border Force staff, says that these replacements will not be able to operate at the same speed as fully trained staff.

Airports are also urging passengers to use e-gates that check passports electronically. Most British citizens and passport holders from America, Australia, Canada and the EU can use e-gates although they cannot be used by children under 12.

How bad could things get? Today is set to be the busiest day of the year at Britain's airports, with nearly 50,000 people arriving at Gatwick alone, so the queues at peak periods could become very long. If arrival halls become too full, passengers will be kept waiting on their planes.

The problem would then be that aircraft often have to turn around to depart in as little as 30 minutes so outbound flights could also get delayed. If aircraft are stuck at gates unable to disembark, airports would quickly run out of space for arriving flights, potentially causing cancellations or diversions. If there is bad weather or some other disruption, problems could rapidly escalate, forcing airlines to cancel flights at the last minute.

Should I change my travel plans to avoid the potential chaos? It is unclear at this stage how bad things will get and whether the government mitigation plans will work. The full picture may not become clear until the strike starts.

At this stage, airlines and airports are saying everything will proceed as normal and that travellers will reach their destinations, albeit with some delay. Passengers who cancel flights themselves will not get refunds.

EasyJet is allowing anybody booked to fly to Birmingham, Gatwick, Glasgow or Manchester on a strike day to change the date of their flight within 14 days on the same route at no extra cost. Alternatively, passengers can obtain a voucher for the value of the flights.

Passengers who have flights cancelled by their airline are entitled to be flown to their destination as soon as practically possible, if necessary on another airline.

The carrier is required to also provide a hotel and meals if passengers are already at the airport.

Airlines do not pay cash compensation and with many flights fully booked for Christmas, alternative seats may be hard to come by.

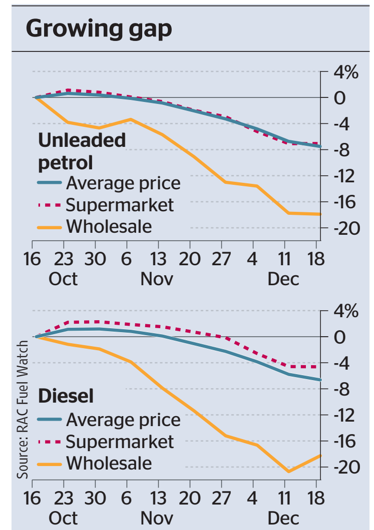


ALEX LENTATI/LNP

prepared to walk out on Christmas Eve in a row over pay and conditions. Services will stop running from about 3pm

Give drivers a fair deal on fuel, demands Shapps

David Byers Assistant Money Editor



The business secretary has threatened fuel retailers with state intervention unless they give drivers a fair deal on prices at the pumps this Christmas.

Grant Shapps wrote a letter to them demanding that they come clean on their pricing formula after the release of RAC data yesterday, which showed record high prices in spite of rapidly falling overheads and a 5p cut in fuel duty. Shapps said that he was "committed to ensuring retailers are offering a fair deal at their forecourts" and "will not hesitate to act to ensure competition is healthy and consumers get a fair deal on their fuel".

RAC figures showed a festive pricing record. A full tank of petrol is an average of £4 more expensive to fill up than it was this time last year, at £84, while filling up an average tank with diesel costs £15 more than it did, at £97. This means that it costs 153p per litre for petrol on average, up 7p from last year, and 176p for diesel, up 27p. However, the figures show there has been no difference in petrol wholesale prices paid by retailers compared with a year ago, and only a modest rise for diesel. The wholesale price of petrol is 106p a litre, which is exactly the same as 12 months ago, while diesel is 126p, or 14p more per litre than last year. Wholesale prices reached all-time highs of 191.5p for unleaded and 199.09p for diesel at the start of July, as supplies were hit by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and have fallen rapidly since then.

Supermarkets, which make 44 per cent of all daily petrol and diesel sales, are under scrutiny for appearing to abandon their policy of competing to be the cheapest. Morrisons, Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury's are charging 151p per litre for petrol on average and 174p for diesel but the RAC claims that, when retailers' costs are taken into account, their prices should be 138p and 160p. It points out that prices should have gone down because of a decision last spring by Rishi Sunak, as chancellor, to cut fuel duty by 5p per litre until next March.

Independent retailers are generally cheaper than supermarkets.

Earlier this month, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the regulator, said it had found evidence of prices shooting up when wholesale costs were high and falling slowly when they went down.

In his letter, Shapps wrote: "It is concerning to see that the CMA's emerging findings point to retail fuel margins rising year-on-year over the past five years ahead of general inflation. In addition, their analysis has found evidence that on occasion the price of fuel at the pump has fallen more slowly than it rises".

Emphasising the toughness of its investigation into the fuel sector, a spokesman for the CMA said: "Following our urgent review in the summer, we are now using our compulsory information-gathering powers to probe the entire road fuel market. We will continue to gather evidence to inform our work ahead of our next update, which we will publish in the spring."

Retailers have hit back at claims that they are overcharging customers. Gordon Balmer, executive director of the Petrol Retailers' Association, said: "The RAC is a motoring organisation. I would not comment on the economics of roadside repairs, so I wouldn't expect them to pass judgment on the economics of fuel either."

Mandarins to help out at airports

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Some of the country's most senior civil servants are preparing to swap their desks in Whitehall for passport booths at Heathrow and Gatwick as part of government efforts to minimise disruption from today's strike by Border Force staff.

Hundreds of officials are expected to join military personnel checking passports as part of contingency plans to keep airports open during the strike by members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union.

However, plans for ministers to also take part are understood to have been dropped because of concerns that their presence could actually make the disruption worse.

More than 1,000 Border Force staff are due to take part in the action, which will affect Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff and Glasgow airports.

Strikes are due to last from today until Boxing Day and then from December 28 until New Year's Eve.

There are fears of long delays and flight cancellations, so about 1,000 civil servants and soldiers have received training to operate passport booths at the affected airports.



A senior government source said that civil servants taking part would include senior officials "across all pay grades" in an attempt to minimise the disruption to passengers.

"Nobody knows exactly how many people are going to be needed but we're doing everything we can to make sure we have the volunteers in place to keep people flowing through," said a government source.

Asked about a plan to include government ministers among the volunteers, they added: "Having a minister and their entourage is probably the last thing that people need to minimise the disruption."

Steve Dann, chief operating officer of Border Force, said that the government had a "reasonable expectation" that it would be able to keep "most if not all ports open" but would not rule out closures under worst-case contingency plans when thousands of staff walked out from today.

Sources said that they expected the strike would not cause too much disruption as many people coming to the UK for Christmas had already arrived in the country. However, they said that the real test would come after Christmas when families who had gone away begin returning to the UK, which would put far more pressure on border checks.

Scramble for last-minute hire cars pushes up prices

Andrew Ellson

Travellers attempting to beat rail strikes by hiring a car have seen their plans stymied by rising prices and little availability.

Last night, the car rental firm Budget had no availability at all in central London for the four days from Christmas Eve to December 27.

Avis did, but mainly luxury models. The cheapest car available from its Battersea depot was £1,540 for an Audi Q3. A better-value option was available at Victoria station — a Volkswagen Golf — but the cost was still £1,000.

Sixt had a compact car at £500 for four days' hire from King's Cross.

All suppliers had more availability and far cheaper prices for the same duration of hire in January. Sixt, for instance, was offering a Peugeot 308 for four days from King's Cross for £160. For the same dates, Avis was offering a Volkswagen Golf from Victoria station for £300.

Adam Forshaw, of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association, said: "The rental sector shrank its fleet during the pandemic and has struggled to grow vehicle numbers since, due to vehicle manufacturers prioritising the retail car market."

He added: "For drivers turning to rental this Christmas, we urge them to beware of scams, particularly offers that look too good to be true. Make sure you know what vehicle you are booking, where it is based and what you are committing to.

"Our members adhere to a strict code of conduct to uphold standards. To protect yourself, look for the BVRLA logo."

One in four tweets about Ukraine and climate are misleading

Ali Mitib

A quarter of tweets posted by premium Twitter subscribers on Ukraine, vaccines, and climate change contain misinformation, according to new research.

The Center for Countering Digital Hate compiled a data set of 58,588 tweets containing the words "Ukraine," "vaccine" and "climate" posted by Twitter Blue users, who have paid the platform £8 a month for benefits including a blue "verified" badge. The researchers analysed 100 tweets on each topic with the most user interactions, each posted after Twitter Blue was launched on November 9.

The tweets had a total of 930,879 likes, retweets and comments.

The researchers found that of the tweets including the word "Ukraine", 23 per cent contained misinformation, such as debunked claims that FTX, a failed cryptocurrency exchange, transferred US aid money to Ukraine and that money had been laundered back to the Democratic Party. This month, Elon Musk, who acquired Twitter in October in a $44 billion deal, claimed that Sam Bankman-Fried, the former chief executive of FTX, who has been extradited to the US to face fraud charges, had donated more than $1 billion to the Democratic party.

Researchers found that 30 per cent of tweets including "vaccine" contained misinformation, with some tweets promoting attacks on Anthony Fauci, the president's chief medical adviser.

This was after Musk attacked Fauci, tweeting unfounded claims that he had "lied to congress" and funded "research that killed millions of people". For tweets containing the word "climate", 28 per cent were characterised as misinformation. Two such tweets were from an account previously removed from Twitter after it was used to promote claims that the 2020 US election was rigged against Donald Trump.

Musk, who also owns Tesla and SpaceX, has previously claimed that the blue "verified" badges would help the platform to weed out "scam content". This week, Musk said he would step down as the chief executive of Twitter once he found someone "foolish enough to take the job".

Imran Ahmed, chief executive of the Center for Countering Digital Hate, said: "Elon Musk cynically claimed Twitter Blue would help combat scam content but we found it has in fact put rocket boosters on the spread of lies and disinformation.

"For just $8 a month, snake oil salesmen, conspiracy theorists and even hostile state actors have jumped to the head of the queue on Twitter, enjoying greater visibility and reach."

GREG MACVEAN PHOTOGRAPHY



Art in focus Turner in January, an annual exhibition of the Romantic painter's watercolours, will open on New Year's Day at the Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh

Russia faces 30-year struggle to recover from Putin's costly war

George Grylls Political Reporter

President Putin has weakened the Russian economy and military to such an extent that it may take up to 30 years for the country to recover its superpower status, western officials believe.

More than 100,000 Russian soldiers have died in Ukraine while the Kremlin has spent a quarter of its annual budget on the war.

Kyiv has succeeded in destroying half of Russia's tanks while Moscow has rapidly used up its stockpile of missiles, ammunition and shells. One senior British government source told The Times that it could take Russia between 20 and 30 years to rebuild its economic and military strength.

On a visit to the US this week, President Zelensky of Ukraine described the money given by western countries to the country as an "investment" and urged allies to pledge more military support to neutralise the threat from Russia. "Your money is not charity. It is an investment in the global security and democracy," he said.

President Biden has agreed to supply Ukraine with Patriot air-defence systems, enabling Kyiv to shoot down ballistic and cruise missiles.

He has refused to sanction the donation of Atacms, a surface-to-surface missile system with a range of up to 190 miles, and suggested Nato allies were uncomfortable about giving Ukraine an offensive weapon capable of hitting Russian territory.

Zelensky's visit to Washington came amid warnings of a further Russian offensive in the new year. Ukrainian armed forces believe that Putin could respond to setbacks in the south and east of the country with an attack on Kyiv around the anniversary of the invasion in February.

Putin travelled to Minsk earlier this week to meet President Lukashenko on a visit closely watched in Kyiv amid fears that Moscow could use trains to rapidly redeploy troops to Belarus to prepare for a new push for Kyiv.

"Our expectation is that they will announce military exercises again in January as an excuse to significantly increase the number of Russian troops and the amount of military equipment in Belarus," a Ukrainian defence source told The Times. "But Lukashenko is making a big mistake. By allowing Russian troops on his territory, he is threatening himself even more than Ukraine."

Zelensky received a standing ovation from members of Congress on his triumphant visit this week as he secured a major prize from Biden in the form of the $2 billion Patriot system. Western governments were initially reluctant to supply longer-range weapons to Ukraine in earlier packages of military aid, but fears of an escalation have subsided amid an increasing confidence in the West to call Putin's bluff. Patriot systems have a range of 20 to 100 miles.

One senior western official said that Ukraine was "winning the war".

"We have gradually ratcheted up our military support. The continuing attacks on civilian infrastructure justify a further response and the Kremlin's nuclear rhetoric has died down," they said.

Professor Phillips O'Brien, a professor of strategic studies at the University of St Andrews, said the Patriot system would be effective for Ukraine.



There are fears President Putin is planning a new year attack on Kyiv

Russia a wounded bear, leading article, page 35

'Inventor' of Bitcoin may have leaked court ruling

Ali Mitib

A computer expert who claims to be the inventor of Bitcoin is facing contempt of court proceedings after a judge said that he may have deliberately leaked details of a High Court ruling.

Dr Craig Wright, 52, won a libel battle against Peter McCormack, a blogger, over a series of tweets posted in 2019 which alleged that his claim to be Satoshi Nakamoto, the creator of Bitcoin, was fraudulent.

In the ruling, handed down in August, Mr Justice Chamberlain KC said the tweets caused "serious harm" to Wright's reputation. However, he awarded him damages of just £1 after the expert put a "deliberately false" case, claiming that he had been disinvited from academic conferences because of the tweets.

In a follow-up judgment published yesterday, Mr Justice Chamberlain said a draft embargoed version of his summer ruling was shared with lawyers on July 26 and that Wright posted messages that evening on a 290-member channel on Slack, the messaging platform, referring to the outcome of the judgment. The sharing of the judgment prior to the court hearing is a common practice in the High Court to allow errors to be corrected before publication.

On July 28, Wright replied to an email containing a summary of the ruling, copying in five people "who were not entitled to know the substance of the judgment", Mr Justice Chamberlain said. A report subsequently produced by the law firm Ontier, representing Wright, said he did not believe his Slack posts breached the embargo and "it was certainly not his intention to do so".

Mr Justice Chamberlain said that he was "unable to accept without further investigation" Wright's explanation that the purpose of his posts was "not to give any indication as to the outcome set out in the draft judgment", but merely to "encourage debate". He added: "I consider that there is a real prospect that a court might find that, by posting those messages, Dr Wright was disclosing, and intending to disclose, the substance of the judgment contrary to the clear terms of the embargo, which had been explained to him.

"The emails … appear to be a further breach of the embargo by Dr Wright, which may amount to a further contempt of court, depending on the view the court takes as to his state of mind when he forwarded the relevant emails." He added that "it would not be appropriate to take no further action in this case, where there is evidence showing that a litigant in High Court proceedings may have acted in deliberate breach of the embargo".

Nigella reveals her recipe for frugal festive get-togethers

George Sandeman

Few would expect a celebrity chef to opt for a budget-friendly Christmas that shuns indulgence. But even Nigella Lawson is taking steps to save money amid the cost of living crisis. For one, she will not be giving anyone Christmas presents on Sunday.

"I certainly feel I am not interested, this year, in buying people who don't need things presents," she said. "You can give them a card to say, 'I've donated in your name in lieu of a Christmas present', so you can feel like you're doing something."

There were, however, many ways for Britons to be frugal and yet still feel festive this Christmas, Lawson said. "Celebrating food with your family is something we all, if we can do, should do and do it gratefully. You want to celebrate being with your family in ways that we haven't been able to but you don't want it to tip into the obscene."

Lawson, who is probably best known for her indulgent recipes, has recently gained attention with cheaper shortcuts such as fish finger bhorta and spaghetti with Marmite. In October she revealed that peanut butter pasta, apparently a family favourite in the Lawson household, and feta, black bean and clementine couscous, can all be cooked for no more than £1.25 a portion. Earlier this month she divided opinion with her recipe for a "breakfast trifle".

At Christmas, overindulgence can leave people feeling like "bloated wrecks", Lawson said yesterday, adding that she never served starters. She said that offering appetisers on Christmas Day seemed like madness given how much food would be eaten at other points, such as during the main course and pudding.

Lawson, who rose to prominence in 1998 after the release of her first book *How to Eat*, said that some people could go past the point of finding eating pleasurable during the festive occasion.

Lawson, who has two children with her late husband, the Times columnist John Diamond, was speaking on *The News Agents* podcast.

Earlier this month she suggested that Times readers might like to try making Mediterranean strata — a savoury bread pudding filled with vegetables such as red peppers, eggs and cheese — for Christmas brunch. "It feels indulgent because of the cheese but it's actually light and very easy to do," she said. "As it cooks, it puffs up and looks like a soufflé, and the bread goes crispy and golden."

In June Lawson caused a stir when she said she was using an Australian food spread for her Marmite pasta recipe. She told The Guardian: "I have recently turned traitor and shifted towards the Vegemite side of the world, and this works as well, unsurprisingly, with the antipodean ointment."

The dish was first conjured up by the Italian food writer Anna Del Conte. In her memoir *Risotto with Nettles*, she said that the dish was "hardly a recipe, but I wanted to include it because I haven't as yet found a child who doesn't like it".



The TV chef says she won't be buying presents this year

JOHN FATKIN/COVER IMAGES



The northeast will not get any snow this weekend but visitors can marvel at the sunrise over Herd Groyne Lighthouse, South Shields

Britons will only dream of a white Christmas

Britons who crave a white Christmas may be disappointed this weekend, with the Scottish Highlands the only part of the country expected to experience snow (Simon Cable writes).

Christmas is expected to be wet and cloudy for most of the UK, as the heavy snowfall came two weeks too early for a white Christmas. Instead, warm air from the southwest will push temperatures as high as 13C in southern England today and with it a band of rain will sweep through England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Temperatures will hover above freezing in northern Scotland, where lower levels may get some snow on Christmas night as cool winds push in from the northwest.

After the band of rain, conditions will be drier in the south and east of England, with blustery winds across the northwest, Wales and Northern Ireland.

David Oliver at the Met Office said: "An unsettled Christmas weekend is on the way for many, with those in the north and west seeing the most frequent and the heaviest showers. High winds will affect some coasts through the weekend with gales in places, especially the north and west.

"There is some uncertainty about the timing of colder air from the northwest but it looks like this will introduce some snow showers to the northwest of Scotland late on Christmas Day."

A white Christmas, which the Met Office defines by a single snowflake falling anywhere in the UK on Christmas Day, is most likely in the northwest of Scotland late on Sunday.

Snow could even be seen in the northwest of the UK at lower levels overnight on Christmas Day and into Boxing Day, the Met Office said.

Stephen Dixon, a Met Office spokesman, said Christmas Eve would stay mainly dry apart from some showers in the northwest. He added that this was typical weather for this time of year, with "a mild, more unsettled pattern in charge".

Probation officer sacked over blunder that left killer free

George Sandeman






Damien Bendall will die in jail for the murders of Lacey Bennett, her brother John and her friend Connie Gent. Three months before the killings Bendall was given a suspended sentence for arson

Blunders by the Probation Service left a man with a history of violence free to kill three children and his partner with a claw hammer.

Damien Bendall, 32, was given a whole-life sentence on Wednesday for the murders, which were committed in September last year, three months after he had received a suspended sentence for arson.

A probation officer who assessed his criminal record for the sentencing judge in the arson case has been sacked for gross misconduct. The official was dismissed for categorising Bendall as medium rather than high risk, The Daily Telegraph reported.

If the pre-sentencing report had accurately reflected the risk he posed, Bendall might not have been free to commit the murders. This and other errors by the Probation Service have prompted the Ministry of Justice to order the chief inspector of probation to carry out a full review of the case.

Bendall also had previous convictions for robbery, grievous bodily harm and possession of a knife in public. He had spent time in prison.

Another probation official has been separately found guilty of misconduct for allocating Bendall's case to a trainee officer. This happened after responsibility for Bendall's supervision was transferred from Swindon, where the arson took place, to the East Midlands, where Bendall was released.

At Derby crown court Bendall pleaded guilty to the murder of his partner Terri Harris, 35, her children John Bennett, 13, and Lacey Bennett, 11, and Lacey's friend Connie Gent, also 11, who was in the house for a sleepover.

The court was told that after attacking Lacey in the living room of her home in Killamarsh, Derbyshire, with a claw hammer, he carried her to the bedroom and raped her in her final moments as her mother lay dying near by. He also pleaded guilty to rape, and his whole-life sentence means that he will die in jail.

After the crimes Bendall took a taxi to Sheffield to exchange John's games console for drugs.

The Probation Service has already come under scrutiny after a report in September found that about 500 serious offences a year were being committed by offenders who were released under supervision.

Sir Robert Buckland, who served as justice secretary for more than two years but was dismissed from the role as part of a cabinet reshuffle three days before the murders, said: "I think we have to acknowledge that such an error is just an appalling failure.

"The ministry has to be as open and transparent as possible about why it happened, and most importantly to make sure the risk of that happening again is kept to a minimum, if not eliminated.

"Frankly, there should be processes in place that mean various thresholds and tests would be met before that sort of fundamental mistake could be made."

RICHARD POHLE FOR THE TIMES



Polished performers Conner Petty, an aircraft engineer, prepares a Hawker Hurricane Mk I that was used in the Battle of Britain for an exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London. Hurricane: Unsung Hero will open on December 27 and showcase seven of only 14 remaining airworthy Hurricanes from the Second World War

Shame on you, cry feminists as Scotland relaxes gender rules

Mark McLaughlin, Oliver Wright

Feminist campaigners cried "Shame on you" as the Scottish parliament passed a law yesterday that will allow people as young as 16 to change their legal gender without medical diagnosis.

The move means Scotland is the only nation in the UK to simplify the process of transitioning but the legislation is likely to face legal challenges before gaining royal assent.

Amid criticism from feminists and applause by trans activists in the public gallery, the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill was approved by the Scottish parliament by 86 votes to 39. The bill was supported by the SNP-Green Scottish government, Labour and the Liberal Democrats, against opposition from the Scottish Conservatives and the government in London.

However, the SNP has faced internal opposition to legislation, including the resignation of Ash Regan, the community safety minister who stepped down to vote against the bill. It has also faced angry opposition from the government in Westminster, which argues that it is incompatible with the Equalities Act, which applies UK wide.

Under the new law, a person will be able to apply for a gender reform certificate having lived in their acquired gender for three months — or six months if they are aged 16 or 17 — rather than the current two years. There will also be a three-month "reflection period" during which they can change their minds. The new rules will also lower the minimum age people can apply to change gender from 18 to 16 and the requirement for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria will be removed.



Police and security staff removed protesters from the public gallery of the Scottish parliament yesterday after a series of vocal interruptions. The Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill was approved by 86 votes to 39

Ahead of the vote, in a letter to Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's first minister, Kemi Badenoch, the equalities minister, said that she was "concerned" that the changes being proposed would create a "divergence" of approach on a "complex and important issue".

"Individuals contemplating the very serious step of changing their legal sex need clarity on the process that they must undertake and I am concerned about the impact [of] having divergent regimes in the different parts of the UK," she said, adding that it was "not possible" for the legislation to be "fully contained" within Scotland.

Government sources said that they feared the Scottish law could be used to allow biologically male Scottish prisoners in English jails to demand to be placed in women's prisons. They also said it could lead to gender tourism, letting Scottish transgender women access female-only spaces in England not available to English people.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has also warned that changes could affect the operation of sex discrimination laws across the UK including equal pay, gender pay gap reporting and measures to address disadvantages experienced by women.

Sturgeon has dismissed concerns the reform will be exploited by sex predators to enter women's spaces, such as changing rooms. At first minister's questions, she said: "Removing the need for medical diagnosis for a trans person who wants to legally change their gender is one of the purposes of this legislation because that is one of the most traumatic and dehumanising parts of the current system. As a woman, I know what it's like to live with the fear at times of potential violence from men. I'm a feminist and I will do everything that I can to protect women's rights for as long as live, but … I will never apologise for trying to spread equality, not reduce it, in our country."

Jamie Greene, a gay Conservative MSP, voted against his party to support the government, insisting that he must look himself in the mirror each day and know he is "on the right side of history".

The bill met with angry protests from feminist groups during its marathon three-day sitting, with disruptive spectators escorted from the chamber by police before the final vote. Security guards stood in front of a woman shouting "Lies" and "Shame" and insisting the bill was a threat to women. A woman next to her stood up and said: "None of you can define gender identity. I'm a duck trapped in a woman's body. I'm a duck. Quack, quack, quack."

Sturgeon's gender bill should worry Labour, Alex Massie, page 31
Spain's trans law to allow change from the age of 14, page 36

University fined over late accounts

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

Buckingham University, which was opened by Margaret Thatcher in 1976, has become the first to be fined by the student watchdog after it filed its accounts more than two years late.

The Office for Students (OfS) gave it three extensions to the deadline for its 2019 accounts but when it missed the third of these, it decided that the university was in breach of the conditions of its registration and fined it £37,000.

The initial deadline was May 2020 and extensions were granted for reasons including complexities the university reported in completing the external audit and the impact of Covid.

When the 2019 accounts were published in June this year, they revealed that auditors had said there was "material uncertainty" over the institution's ability to keep operating, and a deficit of £17.5 million for the year, Times Higher Education website reported.

A key factor in financial problems was Buckingham taking a lease on the former Manchester Metropolitan University campus in Crewe and offering biomedical and podiatry degrees in partnership with an Indian healthcare provider, it said. The OfS said that there was no evidence that Buckingham had benefited financially from its breach.

A university spokeswoman said: "The late publication was because of the complexities of the accounts, exacerbated by Covid lockdowns, including reflecting substantial investment in the new campus in Crewe at that time." The university was in a sound financial position, they added.

Parents lose fight against sex lessons

Will Humphries
Southwest Correspondent

A group of parents has lost a legal challenge against the teaching of gender identity and sex to seven-year-old children in Welsh primary schools.

Campaigners sought a judicial review in the High Court against the Welsh government's relationships and sexuality education (RSE) curriculum, which was launched in September.

The challenge, which was heard last month in Cardiff, was brought by Public Child Protection Wales, which says that the curriculum is inappropriate for primary age children.

The parents argued that they had a fundamental common law right to excuse their children from the lessons.

Dismissing all aspects of the claim, Mrs Justice Steyn said: "Teaching should be neutral from a religious perspective but it is not required to be value neutral." She added that sex education aims to encourage "tolerance between human beings irrespective of their sexual orientation and identity".

Jeremy Miles, the Welsh education minister, was "appalled by the misinformation that has been purposefully spread by some campaigners".

Paul Diamond, representing the claimants, had said "much of the teaching, particularly that regarding LGBTQ+, will concern not facts of a scientific nature but highly contentious theories relating to moral and behavioural choices".

Pair who collected unloved Indian coins set for £2m payday

A couple who spent 45 years collecting more than 1,200 coins relating to India and the East India Company are expected to make more than £2 million when they are sold at auction next year.

Robert Puddester decided to specialise in the coins in the late 1970s, when they were undervalued and undercollected.

In 1983 he was posted to India on business and soon made contacts with societies and dealers all over the country and began buying up rare coins from the time of the company, which was founded in 1600 and dissolved in 1874.

Puddester paid up to £250 for some of the rarer coins, but their value has since soared. The centrepiece of the sale is a Bombay gold mohur, or 15 rupee coin, from 1765. It is expected to fetch £150,000, the same as a 1770 Bombay gold 15 rupees, one of only four known examples. Puddester's wife Norma was also a collector and focused on Sikh coinage of a similar era.

The couple, who now live in Canada, say that they want their coins to be enjoyed by other collectors.



Robert Puddester paid £250 for rare coins now worth £150,000

The East India Company was formed to trade in the Indian Ocean region, initially with the East Indies — the Indian subcontinent and southeast Asia. It seized control of large parts of the Indian subcontinent and at its peak was the world's largest business. It had three armies and twice as many soldiers as the British army.

The sale is being held at Noonans Mayfair, in London. Peter Preston-Morley, from its coins department which helped Puddester amass his collection, said: "This is undoubtedly the finest and most complete group of coins of the English East India Company, and British India, ever assembled … This is the first of a historic series of auctions that will be references in their own right for decades to come."



WILL DAX/SOLENT NEWS





The tunnel to link the house in Sandown with the platform, left, was on the original plans, say Richard and Karen Dance, below

Cliff tunnel plans put parishioners on edge

Two second-home owners accused of treating a coastal village "like a playground" have been given permission to build an underground tunnel to their private cliff-face viewing platform (Will Humphries writes).

Richard and Karen Dance have been granted permission to build a 25ft underground passage to link the basement of their house with a balcony which looks out over the English Channel.

Their plans have divided opinion in the quiet Isle of Wight parish where their £650,000 house is situated. Local councillors vowed to challenge the planning decision, citing concerns about digging through the "fragile" cliff to the viewing platform.

However, the couple argue they are simply completing a feature which was part of the original plans for the house when it was built more than a hundred years ago, by connecting it to a pre-existing tunnel.

Tig Outlaw, a county and parish councillor, said: "We generally feel it is not appropriate to be disturbing a cliff which is somewhat fragile. Sometimes the decisions don't take into account wider community interest."

The Dances, who run six convenience stores in the New Forest, live in Brockenhurst, Hampshire. They purchased the house overlooking Sandown Bay in 2013. When it was built in the early 20th century a tunnel leading to the platform was partially built but access to the house was never completed.

Under the Dances' plans, the basement of the house will be extended and a new tunnel linking the home with the balcony will be built. The Isle of Wight council felt the plans would be "extremely unlikely to affect cliff stability" based on an expert's analysis.

Irmgard Keen, 66, a neighbour who has lived on the cliff for more than seven years, said: "Such a project is used as a playground by people who don't live here permanently."

Structural engineering firm Such Salinger Peters argued that the construction would actually improve cliff stability as it would be built with reinforced poured concrete, brickwork and waterproof membranes.

Customers accuse couriers of stealing and damaging parcels

Charlie Parker

Customers of one of Britain's largest delivery companies are complaining that packages have been delayed, damaged and stolen by couriers.

Homeowners with security cameras on their properties have footage of employees of Evri, which operated under the name Hermes until March, tossing packages at their doors and allegedly taking their items.

A year ago an undercover investigation by The Times revealed that Hermes workers had manhandled parcels and mocked customers.

Now a film shared with The Times shows a courier placing a package on a doorstep, taking a picture to prove delivery and walking off with the parcel.

Richard Frenneaux, 40, the homeowner in south Wales who made the recording, said he reported the theft to Evri on December 9 but was ignored for a week before it was resolved.

"It's undeniable with the footage that he stole the parcel. I explained to them [Evri] that it's kind of disgusting that this kind of criminal activity is going on … and that my concern is that he's clearly been doing that for a week and they could have stopped it on the day."

Evri said: "We have apologised and offered a goodwill gesture to Dr Frenneaux. The driver was quickly removed and their actions are not representative of the 30,000 hard-working couriers delivering for Evri."

Sam, 38, a marketing director in Brighton, said after a similar incident at his home he received no response from the company. He shared a video on Twitter of an Evri courier "taking a picture of it then walking off with it".

The package contained a personalised gift. "It's frustrating," Sam said. "It's left a sour taste in my mouth because it's a present that has disappeared. Either it's disappeared because it's been nicked or it's disappeared because of negligence."

Evri disputed his account, saying it had investigated the incident and any parcels seen in his footage were delivered to neighbouring addresses. "We have not been able to establish any proof of theft," Evri said, adding that it had offered him a goodwill gesture. Sam said his film showed no one else coming near his property that day.



Evri couriers have been accused of flinging parcels at customers' doors

Andrew Stoneman, 56, a chief financial officer who lives in Buckinghamshire, has film of a courier throwing a £90 parcel at his door. He paid for next day delivery; it arrived a month late.

Evri has faced criticism for its handling of parcels in the run-up to Christmas. Many customers have complained online that their presents for loved ones will not arrive on time.

Film of Evri staff throwing parcels at a warehouse in Plymouth was posted online, forcing the firm to apologise. It said: "It looks like these parcels contain clothing and are unlikely to be damaged," but added: "This behaviour is unacceptable and does not meet the standard we require for handling items with care."

A survey by the consumer group Which? found Evri had a 76 per cent satisfaction rating with clients and came fourth out of nine delivery firms.

Reena Sewraz, the Which? retail editor, said: "Even if you think it's down to poor service from the courier, the retailer is responsible for the item until it is successfully delivered."

Evri said most staff "are honest and hard-working. This is reflected in the average star rating for our couriers of 4.63 and our Trustpilot score, which is 'Great', based on over three million independent reviews."

Stone thieves jailed after church raids

Three men who stole valuable paving stones and left churches with repair bills of £125,000 have been sentenced.

The thieves targeted historic buildings across Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Lancashire. Four were grade I listed and had the York stone taken from ancient paths.

The trio were arrested in the summer after one of their vehicles was caught on CCTV at St Mary's Church in Astbury and identified by Cheshire police. Three of the churches had some stone returned.

Jason Perry, 49, from Oldham, was jailed for four years after admitting charges including conspiracy to steal stone and handling a stolen vehicle. Connor Lipinski, 28, from Rochdale, admitted conspiracy to steal stone and was sentenced to three years. Owen Lipinski, 31, from Rochdale, pleaded guilty to the same charge and received a 15-month suspended sentence.

PC Rob Stordy said: "By working together with other forces and with the expert help and advice from Historic England, we have brought these men to justice for pillaging our rich history."

Sunak makes Tory party donor his ethics chief

George Grylls Political Reporter

Rishi Sunak has appointed an Old Etonian investment banker and Conservative Party donor as his ethics adviser in an attempt to restore faith in government standards.

Sir Laurie Magnus, the chairman of Historic England, becomes the prime minister's independent adviser on ministerial interests. Magnus, 67, was deputy chairman of the National Trust from 2005 to 2013.

The position of independent adviser was previously held by Lord Geidt, who resigned from the role in June.

Magnus, who will occupy the role for five years, said an early priority was scrutinising ministers' declarations of interests. "I will endeavour to discharge the important responsibilities of the role with fairness and integrity, in a manner which inspires the confidence of ministers, parliament and the public," he said in a letter to Sunak. "I see maintaining that confidence as a critically important element of governance in this country. It is an honour to be asked to carry out the role, and a significant responsibility."

Magnus has previously donated to Tory party candidates and signed letters urging people to vote Conservative. In 2005, he wrote a letter to the Financial Times before the general election saying the party was best placed to "keep spending and borrowing under control and keep taxes down". He also donated £3,000 to the Conservative MP Nick Boles in 2017.

The independent adviser would usually have been asked to investigate eight complaints of bullying made against Dominic Raab, the justice secretary. However, the role had not yet been filled when the allegations first emerged, meaning that a leading employment barrister, Adam Tolley KC, has been appointed instead.

As well as naming Magnus as his ethics adviser, Sunak has also released an updated version of the ministerial code. There had been calls for the prime minister to empower his adviser by giving him the right to begin investigations. However, the code remains unchanged and Magnus, a senior investment banker at Evercore Partners, will have to seek Sunak's approval before undertaking inquiries into the conduct of ministers.

In his foreword to the updated code, Sunak told ministers they must "work like never before" if they are to "earn the trust of the British people".

"Our country faces profound challenges at home and abroad. People face rising prices and families are feeling the squeeze. So it is incumbent on everyone, at every level of this government, to work like never before to deliver for the British people," Sunak wrote.

"I know ministers enter government because they believe in public service. They work hard because they want to make a difference to others. They do their jobs knowing it is an incredible privilege to serve. In everything we do, we must keep those thoughts at the forefront of our minds to earn the trust of the British people."

Sunak promised during the Tory leadership campaign to fill the role of ethics adviser after two previous occupants resigned amid the scandals of Boris Johnson's premiership. Geidt was closely involved in the row over the lavish makeover of the Downing Street flat. He led an investigation into the funding of the refurbishment that absolved Johnson of wrongdoing on the basis of his claim that he was not aware Lord Brownlow, a Tory donor, had given him £58,000 to help pay for the works. Johnson eventually repaid the cash.

The previous adviser, Sir Alex Allan, led an inquiry into allegations of bullying by Priti Patel, who was then the home secretary, and concluded that she had behaved inappropriately towards civil servants. Johnson refused to sack Patel, leading Allan to quit.



Sir Laurie Magnus is the prime minister's new independent adviser on ministerial interests

Recent inquiries

Rishi Sunak, 2022
As chancellor, Sunak faced an investigation over his family's tax affairs after it emerged his wife, Akshata Murty, claimed non-dom status. Lord Geidt, the independent adviser, concluded Sunak had not broken the ministerial code.

Wallpapergate, 2021
Lord Geidt investigated the funding of the makeover of Boris Johnson's Downing Street flat. Geidt cleared Johnson of wrongdoing on the basis that the prime minister did not know a Conservative donor paid for the makeover. Subsequent texts emerged suggesting otherwise.

Priti Patel, 2020
The home secretary faced allegations of bullying and was referred to Sir Alex Allan, the prime minister's ethics adviser. Allan said her behaviour could on occasion "be described as bullying". Johnson refused to sack Patel and Allan resigned.

Mark Field, 2019
Allan said Field breached the ministerial code when he removed a protester from a City dinner by "pushing her by the neck". Field had already stood down as an MP when the findings were published.

ELDER ORDONEZ/SPLASH NEWS



All you need is … a coat Sir Paul McCartney, 80, wraps up on a visit to New York with his wife Nancy as a winter storm brings freezing temperatures to the US

Criminals among 42 deported Albanians

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Dozens of Albanian criminals and illegal migrants were deported on a chartered flight yesterday.

A total of 42 people with no right to be in the UK landed in Tirana, the Albanian capital, at lunchtime where they were met by officers from the Immigration Enforcement agency of the Home Office.

Three of those deported had arrived in the UK by crossing the Channel in small boats this year, Home Office sources said. More than 13,000 Albanians have crossed the Channel in small boats this year, up from 800 last year. There were 50 in 2020.

Among those on the flight were 32 criminals who had received prison sentences totalling 89 years. They had been convicted of offences including drug production and supply, possession of an offensive weapon, theft, possession of false identity documents, possession of criminal property and entering the UK in breach of a deportation order.

Six of those on the flight were failed asylum seekers and four were found to have committed immigration offences, which could include overstaying visas.

The flight was not part of an agreement to speed up the removal of Albanians who arrive in small boats that was announced by Rishi Sunak last week. That deal will allow Albanians who arrive in small boats to be returned within 31 days of their arrival in the UK, Home Office sources have said.

The prime minister wants Britain to emulate Germany, France, Italy and Sweden, which reject almost 100 per cent of all Albanian asylum claims, compared with 45 per cent in the UK. The Home Office plans to increase the rejection rate by classifying Albania as a "safe country". Applicants will be expected to present firm evidence for their asylum claim to be considered.

The Home Office said: "Those with no right to be in the UK, including dangerous foreign national offenders, should be in no doubt that we will do whatever is necessary to remove them. This is what the public rightly expects."

Watson 'a stain' on Lords benches

Simon Cable, Matt Dathan

Lord Watson of Wyre Forest "stains the benches" of the House of Lords and his apology this week for promoting false child sex abuse claims was intended to "ingratiate himself" with peers, a former Tory MP has claimed.

Harvey Proctor, who was wrongly accused of being a child murderer, rapist and abuser by the fantasist Carl Beech, told Times Radio that the Labour peer had "never apologised" for championing Beech's allegations.

Proctor, 75, who lost his job and his home as a result of the allegations, is the last surviving public figure among those falsely accused of being part of a VIP paedophile ring operating in Westminster. Field Marshal Lord Bramall died in 2019 while Lord Brittan of Spennithorne, the former home secretary, died aged 75 in 2015.

Watson, a former Labour MP, used his maiden speech in the House of Lords on Wednesday to formally apologise for his role in promoting the claims made by Beech, who was also known as "Nick". He apologised to Brittan's widow, Lady Brittan, after he was falsely accused of sex crimes by Beech. After a lengthy delay over his controversial appointment to the House of Lords, Watson was sworn into the upper chamber this week.

Proctor told Times Radio: "I think Tom Watson's apology really was to ingratiate himself to certain sections of the House of Lords, perhaps on the Conservative benches, that he had apologised to Lady Brittan about Lord Brittan who sat in the House of Lords on those very benches.



Lord Watson promoted false claims of a VIP paedophile ring

"Now Tom Watson stains those benches. He didn't mention another lord, Field Marshal Lord Bramall, who was involved in Operation Midland, nor did he apologise to me. Tom Watson has never apologised to me for what he did, in supporting Carl Beech in Operation Midland."

He added: "Come and meet me. Let's discuss this matter on television or radio. And you tell me what happened. You won't do it. I know. But that's what I would suggest he does.

"And it might be helpful if before he tells me what happened, that he gives me a complete and utter apology. I am the only living survivor of the smears and falsehoods of Carl Beech. I think before I die he might apologise."

The botched police inquiry into the allegations, which cost millions of pounds, involved raids on the Brittans' home, among others. MPs and campaigners had fought for Watson to be blocked from receiving a peerage.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse dismissed Watson's "sensational allegations" of a Westminster paedophile conspiracy and said that his role had been a central factor in Theresa May's decision to set up the inquiry.

Beech, himself a convicted paedophile, was jailed for 18 years for fabricating a string of claims including rape, torture and murder.

TMS

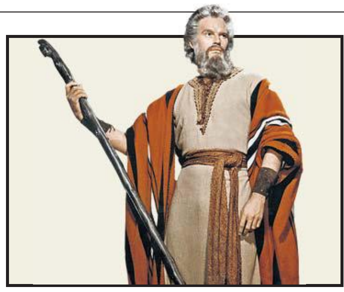
diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Charles the palace jester

The King is a more welcome theatregoer than his mother, says Alan Bennett. The author writes in his annual *London Review of Books* diary about the Queen coming to see his revue, *Beyond the Fringe,* in 1961 and there being only awkward silence from the audience because no one wanted to laugh until their monarch did. She, it seems, was not amused. Charles, on the other hand, loves the theatre, especially comedy. “Far from dampening down an audience, Charles’s presence and his loud laughter help to get them going,” Bennett says.

Prunella Scales played Elizabeth II in Bennett’s A Question of Attribution *in 1988. He later heard that the Queen had complained that Scales was not like her, saying: “She makes wisecracks. I never do.” Yet when she gave the actress the CBE, the Queen told Scales: “I suppose you think you ought to be doing this”, which as Bennett notes is “a laugh-out-loud wisecrack in anybody’s book”.*

SANTA CLAUS PULLS A SICKIE



Santa Claus is not coming to town. Or not to everywhere that wants him in America anyway. A 125 per cent post-Covid rise in demand and a slump in professional Santas has meant that many department stores and office parties have failed to find a Saint Nick. Stephen Arnold, president of the International Brotherhood of Real-Bearded Santas, says membership has fallen from about 2,000 to 1,400 since 2020 for rather grim reasons. “We’re all a little plump,” he said. “Most of us are over 60, in many cases diabetic. We had a much higher incidence of death.” Well that’s a merry thought. But surely Father Christmas can get treatment on the National Elf Service?

Bill Nighy, whose latest film is about living with a fatal diagnosis, intends when his time comes to depart life in style. Asked by Air Mail for his dream last meal, the actor is quite precise. “A proper Welsh rarebit on two toasts with Marmite underneath with grilled cherry tomatoes and The New York Review of Books on the side,” he says. “Open at the sports page.”

MERKEL’S LIPS ARE SEALED

Angela Merkel has kept a low profile since standing down as chancellor of Germany last year, but she has now found a new role as co-host of a podcast series on Wagner’s Ring Cycle. “I wanted to try going in a completely different direction,” Merkel said. Since the three parts of the series are called “Greed”, “Revenge” and “Vanity” it may not be all that different. Merkel said that as she listened again to philandering gods and duplicitous dwarfs squabbling, “certain themes” did come to mind from her meetings with other politicians but added: “I won’t name any names.”

MAGIC OF HOLY WOOD

At an auction of Hollywood props this week the holy staff used by Charlton Heston when he played Moses in *The Ten Commandments,* above, sold for $448,000, more than 20 times its estimate, while other magical pieces of wood did less well. Harry Potter’s broomstick went for $128,000. It seems that destroying the golden calf is more valuable to collectors than catching the golden snitch.

PATRICK KIDD

Ministry gave details of victim to stalker

Peter Chappell

The Ministry of Justice has been accused of giving a violent stalker “ammunition” to target his victim again after it sent him intimate details of their suffering.

Rhianon Bragg fears Gareth Wyn Jones may target her and her family if he is freed from prison as part of a parole application. He is serving a four-and-a-half-year sentence for offences including holding Bragg hostage at gunpoint for eight hours.

The ministry prepared papers that were sent to Jones but in error included a letter by a psychologist who has worked with Bragg in which the impact of his crimes was set out, it was said.

The letter was sent to Jones in February but Bragg was informed only this month of the error. The ministry described the mistake as “unacceptable” and launched an investigation.

Bragg, 50, told The Guardian: “It’s an absolutely horrendous situation. They shared with him my mental health assessment, my diagnosis. They have shared intimate information about me and the children.

“You want to keep everything from a person like him. I can’t get my head around the severity of the damage this will cause. They’ve given ammunition to a dangerous man. What additional measures will be taken to protect us?”

The parole hearing has been postponed because of the error. It has been decided that Jones’s mental health problems could be exacerbated by a public hearing so the application will be heard in private.

Bragg said: “How can you trust a criminal justice system that can’t get the basics right?

“His privacy is flagged up as an essential human right and adhered to utterly. Yet there has been a complete failure to have the same level for my rights. It makes my human rights, not for the first time, seem inconsequential to the criminal justice system.”

Bragg, a clergyman’s daughter, began a relationship with Jones, a mechanic, after moving to her family smallholding in Rhosgadfan, Gwynedd. In their five-year relationship, Jones, 58, verbally abused and physically assaulted her. When she ended the relationship in 2019, he stalked and threatened her.

Jones was arrested and his firearms seized but no further action was taken and his weapons were returned.

In August 2019 he held Bragg at gunpoint for eight hours overnight. In February 2020, Jones was sentenced for stalking, false imprisonment, threats to kill and possession of a firearm.

The ministry said: “The government has made significant changes to better protect stalking victims so we are deeply sorry for this unacceptable mistake and the distress it has caused Ms Bragg. We take this type of error extremely seriously and an investigation is under way to understand what happened.”



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iPhone 14 Plus	36 months	£30	£16.37	£589	£619	0%	0%	£619	£16	£16 + RPI announced in Feb 2023 = Price A	Price A + RPI announced in Feb 2024

***Each year your Airtime Plan will be increased by the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate of inflation announced in February plus 3.9%. If RPI is negative, we'll only apply the 3.9%. You'll see this increase on your April 2022 bill onwards. See o2.co.uk/prices.** £16.37 Device Plan for 36 months and £16 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. iPhone 14 Plus 128GB: £72 saving achieved by £2 per month discount on the 2GB, 5GB, 20GB, 30GB, 100GB, 150GB, Unlimited & Unlimited + Airtime Plans over 36 months. Offer ends 28th December 2022. Purchase the iPhone 14 directly from O2 and save up to £9.16 a month on your new device plan when you trade in an old iPhone. £13.83 per month achieved by trading in your old iPhone device and receiving up to £330 in trade in value, spread across a 36 month device plan. Quoted monthly saving may be adjusted if the trade-in device received by us differs from the submitted device description. Trade-in value based on payable amount on all traded in iPhones between January 2021 and December 2021. £22.99 monthly device plan cost for non-trade in customers. **O2 Recycle:** Your device must pass our checklist. The value of your trade in will depend on the model and condition. Terms apply see o2.co.uk/termsandconditions/mobile/o2recycle. **O2 Refresh custom plans:** Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 36 months (excludes selected pocket hotspot and dongles). The device cost will be the same whatever you choose. There may be an upfront cost. You need a monthly rolling Airtime Plan as long as you have a Device Plan. Pay off your Device Plan at any time and you can choose to keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade or leave. If your Airtime Plan ends for any reason you will need to pay your Device Plan in full. Devices subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefónica UK Ltd, SL1 4DX. Telefónica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms

Suspect charged with murder of Tommy Cooper's niece

Jaya Narain

A man accused of killing Tommy Cooper's niece is to go on trial next year for murder and has been remanded in custody.

Tony King, 59, appeared at Lewes crown court yesterday, charged with the murder of Sabrina Cooper, 68, who was found dead at her home in Eastbourne.

Cooper, whose father was Tommy Cooper's brother David, was discovered at 6.45pm on Sunday after police were alerted to concerns about her welfare.

King, also from the south coast resort town, faced a second charge of possessing an offensive weapon in a public place. Wearing a black leather jacket, unshaven and in spectacles, King sat impassively in the dock and spoke only to confirm his name

Although King did not enter a plea to the charges, the court was told that the early indication was that he would plead not guilty to murder.

Judge Christine Laing KC said that there were "sad circumstances surrounding the case" and adjourned it until next year. King, who was remanded in custody, is due to enter pleas on both charges in March and is scheduled to go trial on in June.

Cooper, a grandmother, had lived for many years in Eastbourne, where she owned and ran the business set up by her father, Cooper's Magic Shop. It closed in April 2017. She was an animal-lover and was often seen in the town walking her dogs.

One resident said: "She was a lovely lady, well liked by everyone. It's such a tragic thing. The shop in Eastbourne, which was part fancy dress, was iconic and everyone remembers it well."

Detective Chief Inspector Emma Vickers, of Sussex police, said: "Our thoughts are with Sabrina's family and friends at this difficult time. We are supporting them and keeping them updated on the progress of this fast-moving investigation.

"We understand this incident will cause upset and concern in the community, and I would like to reassure people that this is being treated as an isolated incident involving people known to each other, and with no threat to the wider public.

"We have already completed extensive inquiries, and this has resulted in a person being arrested and charged within 48 hours of police initially attending the address.

"Those inquiries will continue as the case progresses through the court, and we encourage anyone with concerns or information relating to what happened to get in touch with us."

Crufts judge fined for illegal puppy farm

A Crufts judge has been ordered to pay £78,000 after being caught running a filthy illegal puppy farm (Will Humphries writes).

Gareth Lawler, a well-known Kennel Club judge who specialised in assessing breeds including English springer spaniels, made £153,000 from 27 rogue puppy litters.

Lawler, 57, was a judge at Crufts in March while being investigated by officials for selling expensive puppies. Inspectors found that his own dogs were living "in poor conditions" and suspected he was running an illegal puppy breeding operation.

Officials obtained a warrant to search his home in Hendy, Carmarthenshire, and discovered he had bred 27 litters in four years, Swansea crown court was told. The puppies sell for between £500 and £2,000.

At a proceeds-of-crime hearing Lawler was ordered to repay £78,000 in three months. A judge ordered a 12-month custodial sentence if he failed to do so. Lawler was also fined £500 for unlicensed dog breeding.

His illegal breeding was discovered when Lawler, a grandfather living in Monmouth, applied for a boarding licence.

Carmarthenshire council wanted to search Lawler's home "due to the unsatisfactory conditions his own dogs were being kept in and refusal to allow officers to access areas where other dogs and puppies were housed".

A council spokesman said: "The subsequent search and online investigations uncovered breeding dogs and puppies being kept in poor conditions as well as evidence of large-scale unlicensed dog breeding. Twenty-seven litters were bred between July 24, 2016, and July 22, 2020, 11 of which were bred in the last 12 months, despite being advised of dog breeding regulations on more than one occasion."

Aled Vaughan Owen, a council cabinet member, said: "Mr Lawler is well-known on the dog show circuit, having judged English springer spaniels, cocker spaniels and Welsh springer spaniels at Kennel Club shows and this case indicates the importance of licences for dog boarding and breeding, both of which are in place to protect the welfare of dogs."

"I would like to praise the actions of our animal welfare team who uncovered unlicensed dog breeding."

A Kennel Club spokeswoman said: "The Kennel Club will always follow up relevant criminal convictions with an investigation and impose disciplinary penalties, if appropriate. However, we are obliged to await the outcome and absolute conclusion of the respective criminal proceedings, including any appeals."

GARETH LAWLER FACEBOOK



Gareth Lawler, who judged springer spaniels for the Kennel Club, was found to have bred 27 litters over the course of four years

Gown and town clash over car fees

Laurence Sleator

When hundreds gathered at Parker's Piece, a park in Cambridge, to oppose a "sustainable travel zone" many were surprised to hear the message of America's most famous civil rights campaigner over the loudspeaker.

"Martin Luther King said, 'Injustice in one place is injustice in every place'," Daniel Lentell told the crowd, although they were not King's actual words.

It demonstrates the strength of feeling over plans by 2027-28 to charge drivers £5 on weekdays between 7am and 7pm to drive in and around the city.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership says that the £50 million a year it would raise would be used to cap bus fares, increase the routes and services and improve footpaths and cycle lanes.

The GCP says that there would be exemptions or discounts for certain groups, but that the measure is needed to address the climate emergency, air quality targets, a growing population and the need to ease congestion in a city "creaking under the weight of growth".

A consultation on the proposals ends today but traders and small businesses are unhappy and the plans have brought to the surface tensions between a university class that mostly walks or cycles and the rest who drive into the city.

Lentell, 39, a councillor, who describes himself as a "Cambridge nationalist" resigned from the Liberal Democrats this year over the party's lack of public opposition to the plans.

"This policy is being written by a very narrow slice of Cambridge," he said. "A very certain type of city dweller from a particular economic and cultural perspective." At the protest last month he was more specific: "This is Cambridge: we've got town, we've got gown, we've got shire, we've got city. It's the well-dressed, out of the party shoving their way to the lifeboats. Under this GCP we're Billy Zane [the actor who played Caledon Hockley] out of the Titanic pushing past the poor people, trampling on the people who've got nothing."

The GMB, one of the country's biggest trade unions, agrees and said the "naive" proposals showed a "political class out of touch with anyone who isn't in a well-paid office job or lucky enough to be able to cycle a short distance to a lecture hall".

Elisa Meschini, chairwoman of the GCP, criticised such language as "too simplistic". She said: "It's not a fair criticism and it's rather predictable because this is an emotional issue to say it's the rich pushing it on to the poor.

"People don't believe an alternative is possible but it's incumbent on us to show them there is. I could carry on saying 'a better world is possible' but if we don't do anything about it then things will get unsustainable."

It also has the backing of Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance, which says that the scheme "represents a unique chance to reshape the city and wider county".

But some businesses have made their opposition clear. "We'd have to make everyone redundant, and we'd have to knock it all on the head. The business has been running 40 years," says Doug Stuart, 30, managing director of Ely Skip Hire, which has about 30 staff.

His waste transfer site sits within the boundary and with higher daily prices for vans (£10) and lorries (£50), Stuart estimates it would cost him £420 extra a day.

Also within the boundary is Addenbrooke's Hospital, which treats 60,000 inpatients a year. Although very specific reimbursement schemes are in place, the plan puts healthcare "behind a pay-wall", according to Lentell, and those visiting the hospital for more routine appointments would have to pay.

Meschini, who does not drive in Cambridge but cycles to work, says the 11,000 staff at the hospital need better ways than cars to get to their workplace, and businesses should not worry because such schemes mean "more footfall".

But as the consultation concludes, there are fears that minds have already been made up. Anthony Browne, the MP for South Cambridgeshire, wrote to the GCP this week expressing concern over the "leading questions" put to residents, which include: "To what extent do you support or oppose additional improvements to walking and cycling, accessibility and public spaces?"

Dave Baigent, a Labour councillor, GCP board member and former member of Extinction Rebellion, has been a vociferous supporter of the plans. He tweeted last month: "If you are against the proposals you are supporting the Tories."

The GCP says that no decisions have been made. "The consultation will give us things to make it even better. We are guided by it," says Meschini. "I have just made up my mind [that] something is required."



Last month's protest drew strong feelings

How fake tickets and rumours

Two died in a crush at the doors of the famous Brixton gig venue. **Mario Ledwith** looks at what went wrong

As the Nigerian Afrobeat singer Asake prepared to go on stage for his third sold-out show at the O2 Brixton Academy in south London last Thursday the atmosphere was febrile. There had been "phenomenal demand" for tickets and the concerts had sold out in minutes when they went on sale in September.

Yet what should have been a night of celebration, resulted in mayhem as a crowd forced its way into the venue, tossing bystanders to the ground who were kicked "like a football" in what some said was like a horror film.

The disorder forced the concert to be called off after less than ten minutes and two people died, one a concertgoer and the other a security guard.

A 21-year-old woman is still in a critical condition, and others who were traumatised by what they saw have questioned whether they will ever attend a concert again.

There is a Metropolitan Police investigation, and Lambeth council said yesterday that it had suspended the venue's licence for a month. Here we examine what went so badly wrong.

BUILD-UP

After years in Nigeria's music scene, Asake, whose real name is Ahmed Ololade, exploded in popularity in February with the release of his debut album, *Mr Money with the Vibe*, which reached No 22 in the UK charts.

Singing in English, pidgin and Yoruba, Asake, who is 27 and from Lagos, established himself internationally and began a world tour that included a stop in London, a hub for Afrobeat music.

When Asake's first night at Brixton O2 Academy, as well as concerts in Birmingham and Manchester, sold out in five minutes, two dates were added, ending with the concert last Thursday.

The venue opened in 1929 as a cinema called The Astoria, and is now one of the leading music venues in south London. It is owned by the Academy Music Group, a subsidiary of Live Nation, a US group that calls itself the "world's leading live entertainment company".

The building was almost demolished in the 1970s and was sold for £1 in 1983 and transformed into the Brixton Academy. It is a short walk from Brixton Underground station and has a capacity of 4,921, divided into a lower standing section and upper circle, which is mostly seated.

The hype around Asake's concert at the venue was such that fans questioned why the concert's promoters, YBNL, had not chosen a bigger venue.

With demand for his concerts high, scammers began targeting the hundreds of fans who had missed out by offering tickets with a face value of £55 to £65 at face value, for up to £150 online.

Buzz about the show was increased by false claims that the Nigerian singer Burna Boy would make a guest appearance. Solomon Smith, founder of the Brixton Soup Kitchen, who was planning to attend, saw such a claim on Snapchat, which he said was a ploy to drum up hype for fake ticket sales.

The Fair Ticketing Alliance said that the event was "rife with fraud", with duplicate tickets — often screenshots of digital QR codes — being sold to fans on reselling websites.

A music industry source said that there was a "huge amount" of credit card fraud around resale tickets. This involves a digital ticket being bought using stolen payment details. Once received, and before the fraud is detected, the tickets can then be sold to buyers who believe they are buying an original.

THE SHOW

Asake posted a message before his first London concert on Sunday 11 December advising fans not to attend "if you do not have a valid ticket".

Although the message added that no tickets were available at the venue, rumours had been circulating online and in group chats that fans could bribe security guards to get in.

In March a complaint was made to Lambeth council by Milly Jenkins, who said that her son had seen a security guard taking money to allow admittance to a Slowthai concert. No evidence has emerged showing guards being paid to allow admission to the Asake concert.

Doors for the Asake concerts opened at 7pm, with DJs performing from 7.15pm. The first two concerts, on Sunday and Monday, largely passed without incident. However, concertgoers said that claims of lax security and unchecked tickets began to spread.

Joanne, 21, said that when she arrived at the venue at 7.43pm, entry took between five to ten minutes. "It is probably the quickest I have ever got into a gig," she said.

Yet even at that stage confusion about tickets was apparent. Joanne said that a group of people around her were complaining that their tickets were not scanning, an indication that they had



bought duplicates with codes that had already been scanned to get in.

Security for the event was provided by AP Security, a company based in Northwood, in the London borough of Hillingdon, that employs more than 1,000 people. It provides security at the Royal Albert Hall and Leeds Festival. It has been the main security provider at Brixton Academy since 2004.

The company has not responded to requests for comment on the events that unfolded, only to say that it was working with its lawyers, the authorities and the Academy Group.

A security source said that 180 stewards had worked at the first two concerts, significantly more than usual for such a concert, because of a "perceived risk".

This dropped to between 120 to 130 for the third night due to staffing issues,



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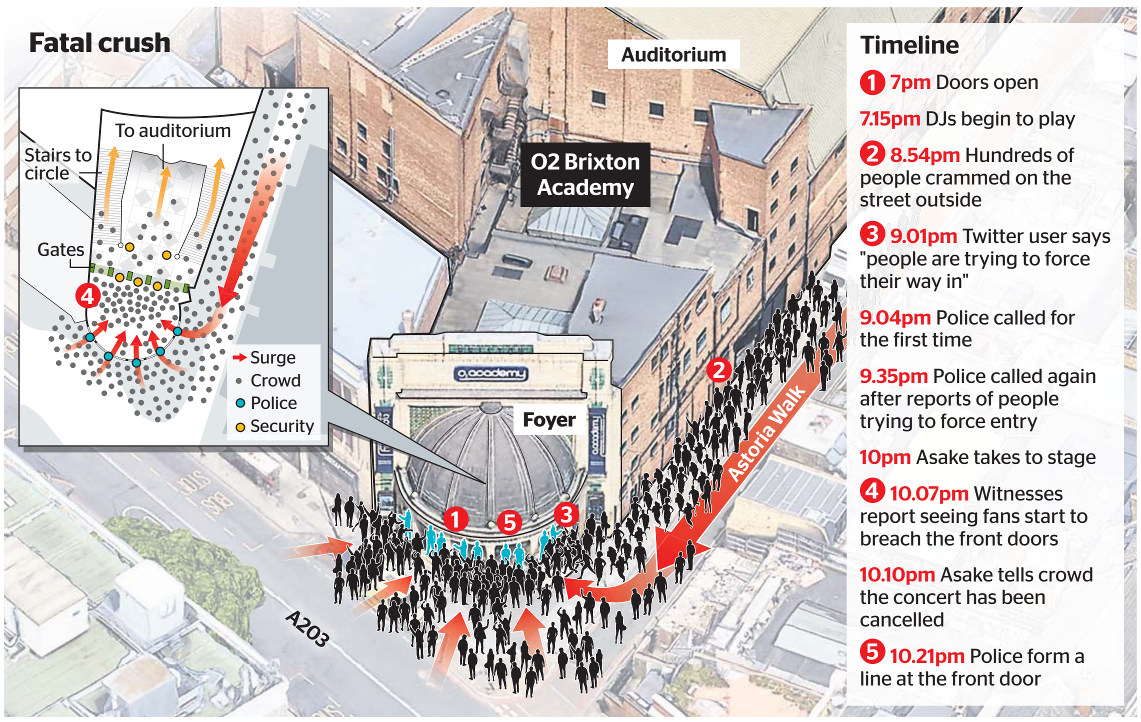
led to tragedy at the Academy







Just before 9pm frustration seeped into the shivering crowd, who were being told by security guards that the venue was full and that they could not let anybody else inside; half an hour later the police were called but it was not until 10.21pm that they had formed a line in front of the venue



still above the level normally used for an event of that size.

TROUBLE BREWING

Temperatures were below zero and a large queue formed after 8pm outside the venue, with concertgoers ushered behind barriers on Astoria Walk, a side street routinely used as an entrance to the venue.

Frustration began to seep into the shivering crowd, who were being told by security guards that the venue was full and that they could not let anybody else inside.

A video posted on Twitter at 8.54pm shows hundreds of people crammed together in the street. Many of those stuck in the queue had bought genuine tickets so began to question how the venue could be at capacity.

The alarm was raised with police at 9.04pm that a large crowd had gathered. Some present said that they had been there for 95 minutes.

Knowing that headline acts would usually begin their sets at 9pm, the crowd became more tense. At 9.01pm, a Twitter user named Monisola said that "people are trying to force their way in" and hundreds of other messages began appearing on social media about the situation.

Solomon Smith, who was in the waiting crowd with two tickets given to him by a promoter, said: "It was 2,000 people who were angry, who were frustrated and angry."



Rebecca Ikumelo, 33, died last Saturday and Gaby Hutchinson, 32, on Monday

Some of the crowd initially tried to force their way through a side door at the venue. A subsequent call was made to the police at 9.35pm.

A video posted online shows the crowd pressed against the front doors, where security guards retreated when it became apparent that the barriers could be breached. The video was captioned: "Stampede all in the name of Asake."

Inside the venue there was tension of a different kind with no sign of Asake on stage and fans asking where the erratic star was. "Even Beyoncé wasn't this late," said one.

Outside, Smith said that some members of the crowd began pushing forward thinking that the concert had already begun. Some fans are seen fainting in the crush. "At that point everyone wanted to get in," he said.

BREAK-IN

When Asake arrived on stage just after 10pm, news of his appearance seemed to be the last straw for the waiting crowd, which witnesses said included a few without tickets, some of them wearing balaclavas.

With the police yet to establish any control over the situation, disorder erupted. "They are rushing the doors," one witness said at 10.07pm, as the crowd nearest the front doors, mostly men, overwhelmed the security guards by pushing through the entrance and streaming into the largely empty foyer.

The gushing crowd created havoc in the immediate entrance, with people tripping over each other and incomers continuing to push forward despite those lying on the ground.

One said she "couldn't breathe" and "completely passed out . . . I thought I was dead."

CANCELLED

A bashful looking Asake, who had only performed one and half songs, announced at about 10.10pm that the show had been cancelled.

"They say that outside is f***ed up already, so we have to end the show, I don't know why," he said.

Fans initially thought that this was a joke but a second man, thought to be one of the promoters, told the crowd that 3,000 people had broken through the front door and that the police had asked them to shut down. People were told to leave via the doors the came in.

Although the show had officially ended, the mayhem continued as departing fans entered the foyer only to be encountered by the incoming rush of those who had been waiting outside.

Fights began to break out, with a man repeatedly kicked on the ground in one altercation and witnesses said that people on the ground were given CPR.

"I saw things I'd never seen in my life before," Joanne said. "It was so traumatising."

By 10.21pm, a line of police officers managed to scramble in front of the door, wielding batons at those still trying to get in. One video shows an officer throwing a woman down the steps of the entrance. The incident is being investigated by the Met.

Another video shows someone hitting an officer, which led to an arrest, as fights break out in the vicinity of the venue. One fan said that Brixton was "red hot".

AFTERMATH

London Ambulance Service took eight people to hospital, some with crush injuries. Rebecca Ikumelo, 33, from Newham, east London, died last Saturday morning. She had two children.

Gaby Hutchinson, 23, a dog handler who had been working at the event, died on Monday. His sister, Kelsey Hutchinson, said yesterday: "Losing our Gaby is a pain that can't compare."

Scotland Yard has launched an investigation and has referred itself to the Independent Office for Police Conduct in accordance with national practice.

Sharon Hodgson, a Labour MP who runs the all-party parliamentary group on ticket abuse, said that she would look into claims of fake ticket sales.

Lambeth council's licensing subcommittee said a full review of the venue's licence would take place on January 16. The Met had earlier referred the venue for a licence review, saying that it was "associated with both serious crime and serious disorder".


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E-scooter death toll has doubled since police put stop to seizures

Simon Cable

Deaths from e-scooter crashes have more than doubled since the police stopped confiscating the machines last year, a coroner has revealed.

Graeme Irvine, senior coroner for east London, has written to Suella Braverman, the home secretary, and Sir Mark Rowley, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, demanding that they act to prevent such deaths.

Irvine was presiding at the inquest into the death of a 14-year-old girl crushed under a minibus when she fell off her e-scooter. The accident was one of 31 fatalities involving the battery-powered devices since 2019.

Fatima Abukar was riding a privately



Sir Mark Rowley is urged to continue seizing e-scooters

owned scooter in East Ham, east London, in May last year when she lost control, the inquest was told. The teenager, who was not wearing a helmet, suffered head injuries and died a short time later.

Private e-scooters are banned from public roads and pavements but are nevertheless common. Irvine said fatalities involving the machines had doubled in the first six months of this year after police stopped seizing them.

Scotland Yard announced in November last year that the force would only confiscate e-scooters from repeat offenders or when officers deemed it "necessary to keep the public safe." The force seized about 4,000 privately owned e-scooters last year, but that figure dropped to 1,100 this year.

"Since 2019 there have been eight recorded fatalities involving e-scooters in London and 31 in the country at large," Irvine said. "At the time of her death Ms Abukar was riding a privately owned e-scooter on a public highway. Despite the ubiquity of such devices on London's streets, riding them on public roads is unlawful."

He added: "An inverse correlation exists between the rate of legal enforcement and the rate of deaths caused by e-scooters."

Irvine noted that not all e-scooter manufacturers and retailers provided users with sufficient written warnings about illegal use.

Trials of rented e-scooters have been extended until May 2024 in dozens of towns and cities across England.

Avanti West Coast is banning e-scooters from its trains and stations from Tuesday because of the risk posed by their lithium-ion batteries. It said the batteries could produce "a vapour of toxic gases and lead to a fire or a risk of explosion" if they were damaged or overheated.

Dave Whitehouse, Avanti's safety and security director, said: "The risks associated with e-scooters are a significant concern and that is why we are banning them at our stations and onboard our trains.

"This temporary ban is to preserve the safety of our colleagues and customers until there is greater regulation on e-scooters. We ask our customers to adhere to these new rules and be kind to our staff helping to enforce them, so we can keep everyone safe."

E-scooters were banned last year by Transport for London (TfL) following a spate of battery fires.

TfL and fire services said such incidents, when defective lithium-ion batteries ruptured and caught fire, could lead to significant harm to life and premises, especially when toxic smoke is emitted in confined spaces.



A dragon's head bangle, a gold ring and 30 coins are in a museum, having been recovered from two men who were trying to sell them after finding them in a field near Leominster

Detectorists who kept hoard fined £600,000

Two metal detectorists found guilty of stealing a £3 million Viking hoard have been ordered to pay £600,000 each or spend five more years in jail (Will Humphries writes).

George Powell, 38, and Layton Davies, 51, both from south Wales, were jailed in 2019 for not declaring their find of rare coins and jewellery in a field in Herefordshire four years earlier.

By law, treasure — including coins and gold and silver objects over 300 years old — must be declared, and if it is bought by a museum, the money is shared between the finder and landowner.



Powell and Davies, metal detectorists from Wales, are behind bars for not declaring their 1,100-year-old discovery

Powell and Davies, convicted of theft and concealing their find, must pay £600,000 each within three months or spend more time in jail. Powell has already been sentenced to ten years and Davies to eight and a half years.

The hoard was found in a field in Eye, a village near Leominster, and included a 9th-century gold ring, a crystal pendant, a dragon's head bracelet and an ingot. Those items have been recovered and valued at £275,000.

Thirty coins, which have also been recovered, were valued at £501,000 by the British Museum. Judge Nicholas Cartwright said in a proceeds-of-crime hearing at Worcester crown court he believed the men were hiding a further 270 coins worth at least £10,000 each.

When the men were sentenced, the judge said that if they had declared the find, they would have received up to half the £3 million value of the hoard between them.

Historians have said the treasure, thought to have been buried by Vikings 1,100 years ago, has the power to rewrite medieval history. Gareth Williams, a curator of early medieval coins at the British Museum, said: "The theft of the objects themselves is bad enough, but the theft of history is even more serious."

The most precious coins were stamped with an image of Alfred the Great and Ceolwulf II, who had a short-lived alliance with Alfred from AD874 to about 879, suggesting that Alfred used Ceolwulf to defeat Viking invaders before turning on him and taking his land. These "two emperors" coins, valued at £50,000 apiece, are so rare that until recently there were only two known examples.

Hunters gathered pottery skills quickly

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

The knowledge of how to make pottery spread like wildfire among the hunter-gatherers of Stone Age Europe, covering thousands of miles in a few hundred years, a study shows.

The earliest forms of pottery found near where the Volga river runs into the Caspian Sea, close to the border of modern-day Russia and Kazakhstan, date back 8,000 years to 5900BC.

Researchers have traced the spread of pottery from there northward and westward into Europe, finding that it travelled 1,860 miles to parts of the Baltic near modern-day Denmark and Finland within 300 to 400 years, covering about 150 miles each generation.

By contrast, it took up to 6,000 years for agriculture and farming to make their way from the near east across to western Europe, scientists believe.

Rowan McLaughlin, of Maynooth University in Ireland, one of the study's authors, said that one explanation for this could be that agriculture tended to be spread by expanding populations who brought new practices with them as they migrated slowly over millennia.

Pottery, however, was often brought as a new skill by women who married into a different hunter-gatherer community, allowing for faster transmission.

The researchers examined fragments of 1,226 vessels from 156 hunter-gatherer sites across eastern Europe and Russia, analysing the age of the pottery via radiocarbon dating, the shape and decoration on the vessels and the residues found in the pots.

Oliver Craig, professor of archaeology at the University of York, said: "Our analysis of the ways pots were designed and decorated as well as new radiocarbon dates suggest that knowledge of pottery spread through a process of cultural transmission.

"The activity spread by the exchange of ideas between groups of hunter-gatherers living nearby, rather than through migration of people or an expanding population as we see for other key changes in human history. That methods of pottery-making spread so far and so fast is quite surprising. Specific knowledge may have been shared through marriages or at centres of aggregation, specific points in the landscape where groups of hunter-gatherers came together perhaps at certain times of the year."

The earliest forms of pottery were found many millennia earlier in east Asia, but did not cross the Ural mountains until about 6000BC. "For some reason, after 6000BC that technology really started expanding very, very quickly," McLaughlin said.

Carl Heron, the director of scientific research at the British Museum, said: "We found evidence that the vessels were used for cooking a wide range of animals, fish and plants. We also found patterns suggesting that pottery use was transmitted along with knowledge of their manufacture and decoration. These can be seen as culinary traditions that were rapidly transmitted with the artefacts themselves."

Fresh-faced Cowell tries a South Korean mask

George Sandeman

Having extolled the virtues of Botox and seemingly appreciating the artistry of plastic surgeons, Simon Cowell's beauty regime has apparently taken in a facemask product from South Korea.

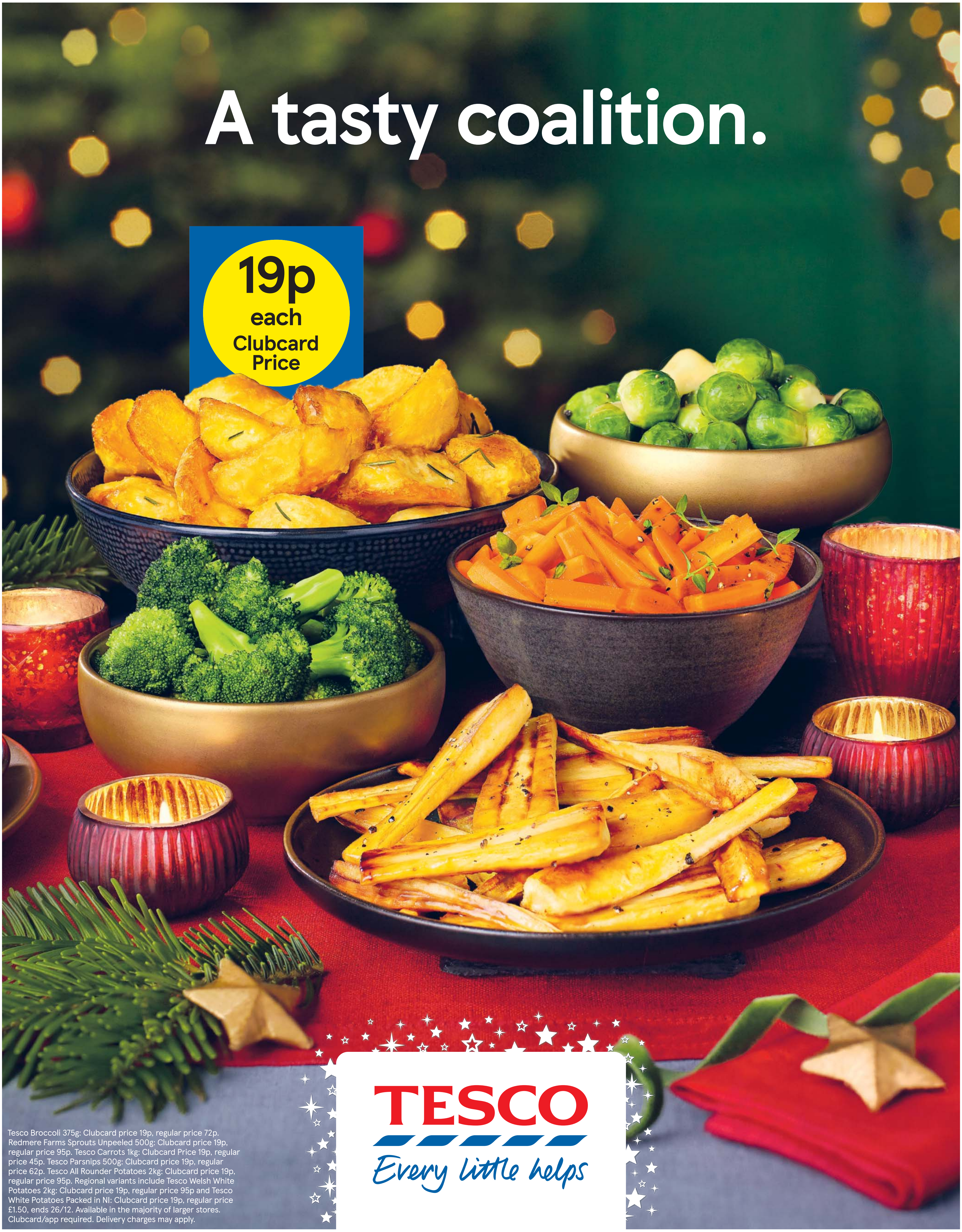
The *Britain's Got Talent* judge, 63, has recently begun using Hanacure, according to the Daily Mail. It consists of a gel and serum that are painted on to the skin, and has been popularised by celebrities including Kim Kardashian and Drew Barrymore.



The reaction between the chemicals creates a dry and rigid crust that is washed off after 30 minutes, although users are unable to move their mouths during this period. The manufacturers say that the masks lead to instant tightening and brightening as well as reversal of numerous signs of ageing, including wrinkles, hyperpigmentation and loss of elasticity. They recommend using one mask a month.

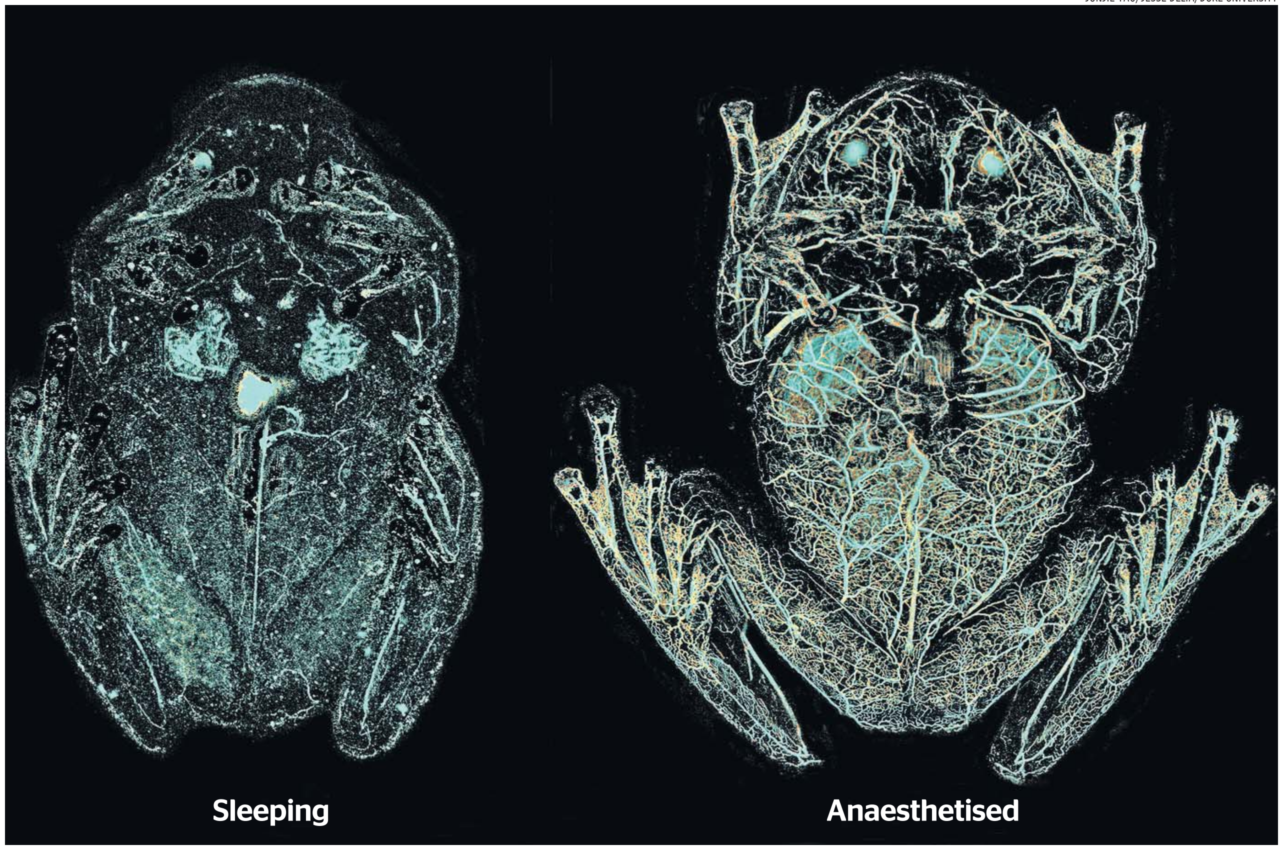
Speaking about his use of Botox, Cowell said: "I've had Botox, but then again pretty much everyone I know has. To me, Botox is no more unusual than toothpaste. It works. You do it once a year — who cares?"

Some have previously poked fun at Cowell for his changing appearance, including the comedian Frank Skinner. "I remember Simon Cowell when he had his first face," he told the Absolute Radio breakfast show in 2019. "The current one is … actually quite terrifying … a man of his money you'd think could get the best plastic surgeon in the world."


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The glass frog is mostly see-through, but its red blood cells are opaque. As it sleeps, the amphibian stores them in its liver, which takes on a reflective appearance to let the frog blend in with its surroundings

A giant leap for blood clot research?

Rhys Blakely Science Correspondent

When glass frogs fall asleep in the trees of the tropics they fade from view. The muscles and bellies of these small amphibians become translucent, hence their name.

Now scientists have discovered how they perform this vanishing act: by hiding almost all of their bright-red blood in a unique mirror-coated liver.

This makes much of the frogs' bodies see-through, which helps them to hide from predators.

The findings could open new avenues of research into blood clots, which the frogs somehow avoid even though they regularly cram about 90 per cent of their red blood cells into their livers each day.

"There are more than 150 species of known glass frogs in the world, and yet we're really just starting to learn about some of the really incredible ways they interact with their environment," said Dr Jesse Delia of New York's American Museum of Natural History, a co-author of the study, which has been published in the journal Science.

The frogs, which live in the American tropics, are nocturnal. They spend their days sleeping upside down on translucent leaves that match the green colour of their backs, providing camouflage.

Their undersides, however, are covered in translucent skin and muscle, which allows their bones and organs to be seen. Researchers believe that this helps mask the frogs from predators.

In particular, their see-through legs, which surround the body as they rest, soften the frogs' outline.

However, being transparent is tricky for vertebrates, in part because their circulatory system is full of opaque red blood cells.

Studies have found that some other animals — including ice fish and larval eels — achieve transparency by not producing haemoglobin, a protein that carries oxygen and makes blood cells red. The frogs use a different strategy.



Several of the tiny creatures use a leaf as camouflage to escape detection

"Glass frogs overcome this challenge by essentially hiding red blood cells from view," said Carlos Taboada of Duke University, another co-author of the study.

The researchers used a technique called photoacoustic imaging, which uses light to induce red blood cells to produce sound waves. This allows researchers to map the location of the cells within sleeping frogs without touching them or sacrificing them. This was important because glass frog transparency is disrupted by activity, stress, anaesthesia and death.

The researchers focused on one particular species of glass frog, *Hyalinobatrachium fleischmanni*. They found that resting frogs could double or treble their transparency by removing nearly 90 per cent of their red blood cells from circulation and packing them within their livers, which contain reflective guanine crystals. These give the organ a mirror-like quality, helping it to blend into the background.

When the frogs need to resume activity, they bring the red blood cells back into the rest of the body, which enables them to move around. When this happens, the opaque cells reduce the frogs' translucence.

In most vertebrates, gathering together large amounts of red blood cells would raise the risk of dangerous blood clots forming in veins and arteries. But not in glass frogs.

The researchers believe that the frogs may have a secret that could help develop new anti-clotting medicines for people.

"This is the first of a series of studies documenting the physiology of vertebrate transparency, and it will hopefully stimulate biomedical work to translate these frogs' extreme physiology into novel targets for human health and medicine," Delia said.

Seagrass meadows to save seahorses

Kaya Burgess

Conservationists hope to ride to the rescue of tiny seahorses by sowing huge "meadows" of seagrass off the north coast of Wales.

The National Lottery has given £1 million towards the North Wales seagrass ocean rescue plan, which will involve five million seagrass seeds being sown over 25 acres (10 hectares) of seabed — about 14 times the size of the pitch at Wembley stadium.

Seahorses ride underwater currents and feed on seagrass. Both the species that are native to Britain, the spiny and the short-snouted seahorse, were given protected status in 2008 as their numbers were falling because of the destruction of their natural habitat. Pollution, trawler nets and damage from motor boats have been blamed.



The short-snouted seahorse was in decline as its habitat was destroyed

Sowing new meadows of seagrass will help seahorse populations thrive. They will also soak up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and trap it within the seabed. It is hoped the meadows will attract 80,000 fish and more than 100 million invertebrates.

The project is supported by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Swansea University and the North Wales Wildlife Trust.

Ricardo Zanre, the marine programme manager at the WWF, said: "Seagrass is a wonder plant which provides incredible benefits for people, nature and climate. Sadly, it has all but disappeared from Welsh waters, so we are delighted to receive this funding which will help us restore vital seagrass meadows to the north Wales coastline.

"Seagrass supports a variety of marine species from seals to anemones, provides nursery grounds for the fish we eat, and absorbs carbon to help tackle global warming." He added that with the restoration of seagrass "we are building a powerful ally" that would help us adapt to and mitigate climate change. The UK has lost about 92 per cent of its seagrass during the past century.

Andrew White, director of the National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales, said: "The need to tackle and reverse the effects of climate change has never been greater and funding important nature projects such as this is a key priority. This important seagrass restoration project … will help revitalise and restore seagrass meadows and train local residents in marine conservation skills so that they can get actively involved in combating global warming."

Weekly jab for children with growth hormone disorder

Kat Lay Health Editor

Children with a growth disorder also suffered by the World Cup winner Lionel Messi are set to benefit on the NHS from a jab that needs to be given only weekly, rather than daily.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice) has recommended a weekly treatment for children who have insufficient levels of a growth hormone.

Messi's growth hormone deficiency (GHD) was diagnosed in childhood. When he signed for Barcelona aged just 12 the club paid for daily treatment with a synthetic version of the hormone, called somatropin. He has spoken about injecting it into his leg nightly.

Currently, all children being treated for GHD must also have daily jabs. Nice said that somatrogon would be an option for children aged three and above, after clinical trials showed it was as effective as current treatment.

About 2,200 children could benefit from the decision.

The guidance states the treatment costs between £166.08 and £343.45 per 1.2ml vial, depending on the dose.

"At the recommended dose of 0.66mg per kg per week, the estimated annual cost for a 40kg patient is £9,500," it says.

Helen Knight, director of medicines evaluation at Nice, said: "The recommendation of somatrogon is a welcome development for the care of children with a growth disturbance caused by growth hormone deficiency."

She said that the decision also marked a milestone for the organisation, which had rolled out a new approach to drug appraisal, allowing it to evaluate the drug in 22 weeks rather than the expected 29.



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‘Some people call back to say: if it wasn’t for you I wouldn’t be here’

THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES
CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Eleanor Hayward
Health Correspondent

While many of us might spend Christmas Day evening dozing in front of the television with a box of Quality Street, for staff at the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) it is one of the busiest nights of the year.

The suicide prevention charity’s helpline will be open as usual on Sunday from 5pm to midnight, with a team of 26 professional staff fielding hundreds of calls from people considering ending their life.

CALM’s helpline and webchat is open 365 days a year, offering confidential advice and practical support for those who are struggling or in crisis. Demand increases over the festive period, when loneliness, grief and poverty can feel particularly intense. Last December, calls were 23 per cent higher than average, and the charity expects to have 26,000 contacts in total this month.



Allie, who has worked on the helpline for nearly a decade, said: “For some people, December is full of dread. They dread the thought of another Christmas Day, another new year approaching. They feel suicidal, they can’t face another year.

“On Christmas Day you hear from lots of people spending it alone. They are upset that everyone else seems to be having a good time and they’re on their own in the cold with no heating on. Sometimes it’s a case of them just wanting the day to end.

“We tell them to just treat it like a normal day, to think of what they’d do if it wasn’t Christmas: have a meal, put a bit of music on, find a distraction.”

CALM, one of three charities chosen for The Times and The Sunday Times Christmas Appeal, provides a lifeline for people who feel suicidal, with staff aiming to give distressed callers a practical “action plan” so they can face the future.

Rebekah, who will be answering calls for CALM this Christmas, said: “You tell them to take a deep breath and then we talk it over. The goal is that everyone has a plan by the time they’re off the phone. It might be to go to their GP, make a cup of tea, have something to eat, and phone back tomorrow. We are happy for people to keep calling us night after night.

“For some people, just having a voice at the end of the phone gives them that feeling of connection. Once they’ve talked about how they’re feeling it doesn’t seem half as bad. The helpline is a safe place, they’re not judged and there is no age barrier. My youngest caller was 15 and my eldest was a man in his 80s.” The CALM helpline is anonymous and confidential. Although the staff do not know the identities of the people they are speaking to, they recognise familiar voices and form a rapport with callers who ring back night after night.

Rebekah said: “Some people phone back at this time of year to say, ‘If it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t be here’. They wouldn’t have made it to Christmas without the helpline. That gives me a smile.”

Allie said: “I remember getting a call from a man at midnight who was walking in the park drinking heavy spirits. He had lost his mum, hadn’t eaten for about three days and was facing eviction from his flat. He just wanted to end his life. We came up with a plan for what would prevent him ending his life. He rang back two weeks later and he thanked me for saving his life. He had reconnected with his sister and been to a GP to get antidepressants.”

The charity receives more contacts each month than its staff can answer, having experienced a 74 per cent increase compared with before the pandemic. Over the past few months, the helpline staff have noticed a big increase in people struggling to pay heating bills.

Allie said: “During Covid, we had a lot of really frightened and lonely people. Now the cost of living is the main topic. Every night we get a few calls mentioning the cost of living. People asking how are they going to afford to put the heating on, how are they going to afford to cook?”

CALM launched its helpline in 1997, and it is funded exclusively through charitable donations. The helpline and webchat are free, providing advice and support to anyone of any age or gender. Every £1 donated to CALM in our Christmas Appeal will be doubled up to £300,000, thanks to £200,000 from the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust and £100,000 from an anonymous donor.

● *Names have been changed to maintain anonymity*

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ANDREW MATTHEWS/PA



Dancing at dusk The winter solstice is marked at Brighton’s long-running Burning the Clocks event after a two-year hiatus



Police in race row after defaming black Royal Marine

Tom Ball Northern Correspondent
Ross Slater

Police in West Yorkshire have been accused of racism after a high court judge found the force defamed a black Royal Marine in an email to his superiors.

It is the first time a force has been found to have committed the highest level of defamation, referred to as a Chase Level One libel.

The West Yorkshire force is facing substantial costs and damages.

In an email sent to a Royal Navy commander, the force accused the marine of "threats and blatant lies" stating his behaviour was "far below the standard expected of a member of the armed forces".

The force sent the email before it had approached the marine with any allegations about his conduct or formally interviewed a complainant.

Mr Justice Johnson has concluded that the force's chief constable did libel the man, who cannot be named for legal reasons.

A further hearing will determine costs and damages.

The marine told The Times that he believed the force's conduct had been motivated by racism. "West Yorkshire Police sent that email not believing they were dealing with an actual Royal Marine," he said. "They thought this was some fantasist black man harassing his white partner and they treated me with complete disdain."

The police, who arrested the man the day after emailing his superiors in August 2020, took 14 months to submit a file to the Crown Prosecution Service, who dropped the case for lack of evidence.

Yair Cohen, of Cohen Davis Solicitors, who represented the marine, said: "There is a presumption that the police should be believed and this represented a breach of that trust.

They simply made up their minds that this man was guilty and tried to ruin his life, saying he was not fit to be a soldier or member of the armed forces."

The case came about because of a hearing in the family court concerning the marine's access to his daughter after he split from the girl's mother.

The mother broke a court order by taking the girl to Switzerland in the summer of 2020, prompting the marine to apply to the court for her return.

She contacted PC Cathryn Harrison alleging that an email sent to her by her former partner showed "harassment" and "controlling and coercive behaviour" and casting doubt on whether he really had joined the marines.

Harrison emailed his warrant officer. In it she said the couple were in a "messy custody battle" and alleged that the soldier used his military background as a means to control her.

The email added that the police would be seeking a charge of controlling and coercive behaviour/harassment and asked the Royal Navy to launch an internal investigation.

Johnson said the email "does not merely repeat but in effect endorses the allegations made by the claimant's former partner".

West Yorkshire Police said it was unable to comment because of legal proceedings.

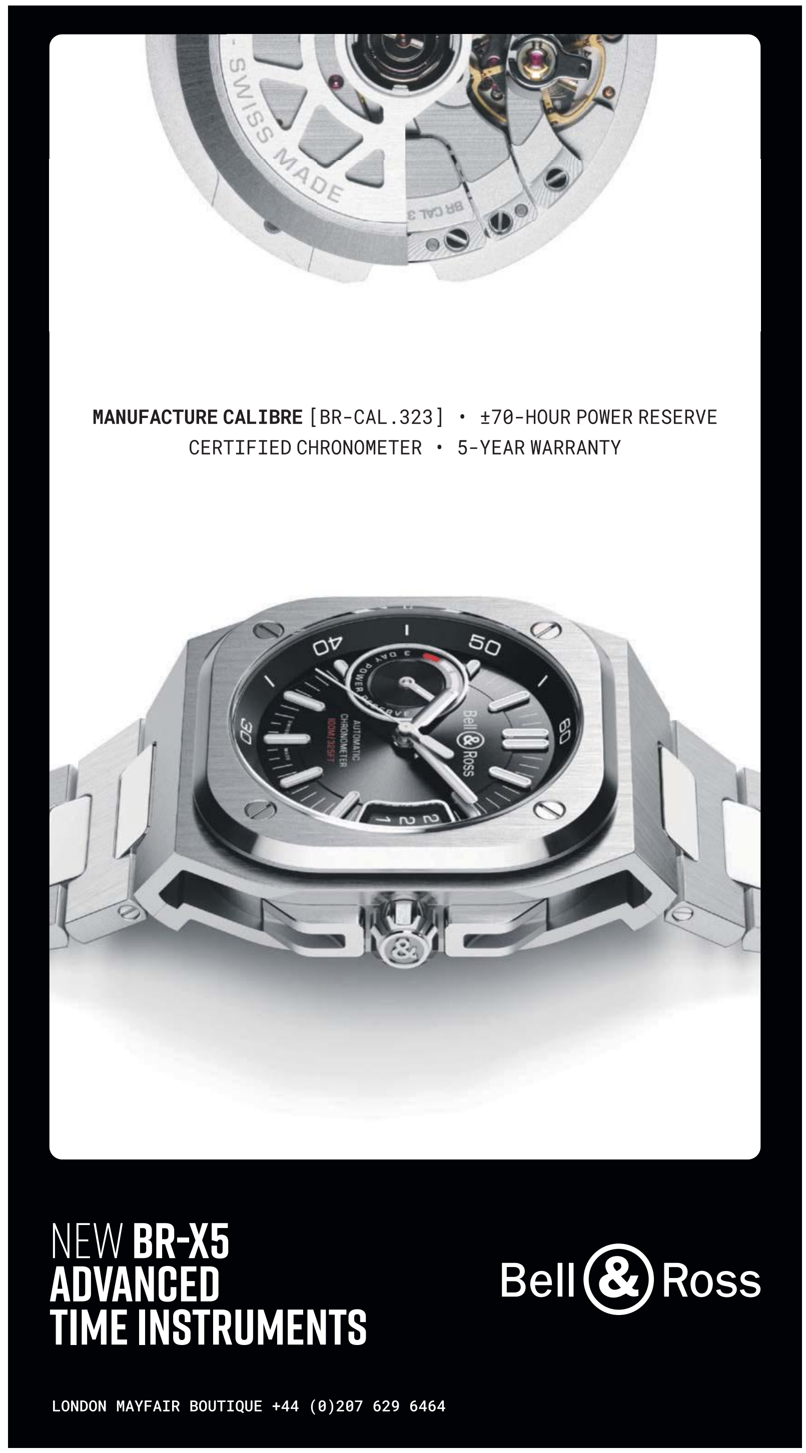


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PULLOUT




Glass Onion
a Knives Out mystery
NETFLIX
Lucien
Le Director
NETFLIX
Jürgen
The Prop Guy
NETFLIX
Hunter
The Action Hero
NETFLIX
Mike
The Sound Guy
NETFLIX
Suki
The Makeup Artist
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Philomena
The Actor
Death & the Dove
A playable Knives Out murder mystery
Consider yourself a bit of an amateur sleuth? A budding Benoit Blanc? Think you've got what it takes to crack the case? Time to prove it. This Christmas, gather five of those you hold dearest (and maybe most suspicious) for a Knives Out-inspired murder mystery game.
In 25 minutes of murder, motives and accusations, see if you really are the next master detective. Everything you need is across this double-sided page, so what are you waiting for? The game is afoot! Cut the cards out along the dotted lines and hand one of them to each of your guests.
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Glass Onion

Death & the Dove

A playable **Knives Out** murder mystery

Read aloud

You are the cast and crew of Death & the Dove, a bone-chilling new murder mystery about a wealthy bird watcher. The final day of filming has arrived. But, when you arrive at the aviary to shoot the murder scene, you're shocked to find a real body. The corpse of the film's producer, Darryl Golding. His neck is swollen and a single white feather is sticking out of his mouth. With no help available, and a killer in your midst, it's up to you to figure out who committed this murder most fowl.

Jürgen's Bio

- I'm artistic, sensitive and very German.
- I have made all the taxidermy doves for the film.
- I love the morbid beauty found in things no longer of the living realm.

Throughout the game, tell people how good they would look stuffed.

Witness Statement

- That night, I had a drink with Suki. I wouldn't break her heart like Darryl. She was so upset she wrecked her dressing room.
- Then I spent ages prepping the aviary with my false doves. Turns out Mike's allergic to the feathers of my real taxidermied friends.
- Darryl insisted on checking the aviary. I knocked on his door, only to overhear a ruckus between him and Hunter. I hate conflict, so I left a note.

Are You The Killer?

You are INNOCENT of the murder.

Lucien's Bio

- I am fiery with a strong French accent.
- I have won many directing awards.
- In my cinematic art, I push for authenticity, at all costs.
- People say I'm demanding and rude, but I do not care.

Shake your head and tut at everyone throughout the game.

Witness Statement

- This whole production is a mess. Not least because Philomena wants to sell the company to cover medical costs, but Darryl refused.
- Without me it would all collapse. Although, Mike has proven useful. He is a terrible sound man, has odd plastic surgery, but his script suggestions are fantastique.
- That night, I went for a walk in the grounds and read the script aloud. That's when I saw Suki running away from the aviary.

Are You The Killer?

You are INNOCENT of the murder.

Mike's Bio

- I'm the film's sound guy, although I can be pretty clumsy with the equipment.
- Luckily, my screenwriting skills from a former life have kept me in the director's good graces.
- I wear an eye patch to limit my vision and enhance my hearing.

Sneeze throughout the game.

Witness Statement

- On the night of the murder, I was out recording bird sounds. I needed a very specific owl hoot. It sounds a bit like this [make hooting sound].
- I was repeatedly interrupted. First Darryl rustled past heading towards the aviary. Then later I heard Lucien shouting "I'll kill you!" which is a bit suspicious.
- On my way to bed, I stopped by Hunter's room for some allergy cream. The feathers on set have been causing me irritation all day.

Are You The Killer?

You are the MURDERER. Don't tell anyone!

Hunter's Bio

- I'm an action hero with sculpted abs, check 'em out.
- I play a bird watcher, someone that watches birds or something.
- You obviously know me from the Bulletproof Hotdog franchise.
- Wanna see how to take a kick to the groin?

Throughout the game, show off your abs.

Witness Statement

- Sure, I had a, uh, 'heated' conversation with Darryl about my speech being cut. But I didn't kill him over it, jeez.
- On my way back I saw Philomena in the laundry room trying to get a red stain off her pillow. Strange.
- I spent the rest of the night in my room learning my lines, like a pro.
- Mike knocked, asking for some allergy cream for a rash on his neck.

Are You The Killer?

You are INNOCENT of the murder.

Philomena's Bio

- I'm an actor from the Golden Age of Hollywood. My age is my own business.
- Along with Darryl, I co-own the production company behind this movie.
- I always carry an expensive feather pillow for my bad back.

Throughout the game, moan about your sore back.

Witness Statement

- Darryl and I had a civil conversation about a business matter. I explained my dislike for Lucien's extreme directing methods.
- Darryl wasn't perfect. I heard how he stole a gifted young writer's idea years ago. Whatever happened to that poor writer?
- After my conversation with Darryl, I went to make my usual Bloody Mary nightcap. But I spilled tomato juice on my pillow.

Are You The Killer?

You are INNOCENT of the murder.

Suki's Bio

- I'm a glamorous makeup artist from New York, hence the accent.
- I'm rarely seen without my white feather boa.
- I have a huge collection of costumes, wigs and prosthetics.

Throughout the game, tell people how they'd improve their look.

Witness Statement

- That night, Jürgen cornered me at the bar, talking about how he'd taxidermied everything except a human, then he complimented my bone structure.
- I escaped, helping old Philomena upstairs. She was carrying a damp pillow. Eww. When I got to my room, my feather boa and wig were missing, I didn't worry about it. I went to bed early for my beauty sleep.
- When I woke up the wig and boa were back in their usual place. What's that all about?

Are You The Killer?

You are INNOCENT of the murder.

The Rules

PART ONE

Best experienced with 6 players, if you have less you can play as more than one character.

Once you have cut out the Cards, hand out the Character Bios face down. Each player will need a pencil and pen for notes.

Study your cards. Get into character.

If your card says 'you are the Murderer' at the bottom, don't tell anyone!

It's time for the game to begin.

PART TWO

Introduce yourselves! Go around the table reading out your Name and Character Bio.

Based on who you think is the most suspicious, gather votes for the Prime Suspect.

PART THREE

Now go around the table again and have everyone read aloud their Witness Statement.

Make sure you all listen carefully and note down any motives and opportunities from what you've heard.

After every witness statement, you should vote again on the Prime Suspect.

When you've all read your Witness Statements, come back here for the last set of instructions.

PART FOUR

It's time for The Reveal. Read out the identity of the Murderer (found in the magnifying glass).

If the player currently the Prime Suspect is the Murderer, well done! You've caught the Murderer!

If an Innocent person is the Prime Suspect, the Murderer wins.

The Reveal

A gifted writer left penniless when Darryl stole his script. A man of disguises: plastic surgery, a job, an eye patch. Then, a wig and feather boa stolen from Suki. Said boa used to strangle Darryl. Ultimately, his deceptions could not elude his feather allergy. Nor could he hide his writing flair, which proved so valuable to Lucien. That man is... Mike, the sound guy!

This is no time for contrarianism on Ukraine
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Comment

Sturgeon's gender bill should worry Labour

Scottish vote is a warning to Westminster about ideological capture and the perils of ill-thought-out legislation

Alex Massie



@ALEXMASSIE

The end of a year is a fine occasion to confess an unpopular opinion. Voters enjoy believing that politicians are inveterate liars. The truth is often much more disturbing: what a politician says in public is usually what they mean. And if they keep saying the same thing, there is increasingly little reason to doubt them.

So I believe Nicola Sturgeon is in earnest when she protests that she is a "feminist to her fingertips", and I accept her sincerity when she insists there is no conflict between the rights of transgender people and those of women. She is not lying. It's much worse than that: she doesn't understand the implications of the gender recognition reforms passed by the Scottish parliament yesterday.

"I have thought very, very deeply about all of these issues for a very long time," she says, but longevity of thought has not been matched by any profundity.

The first minister doesn't understand because she chooses not to hear and because, ultimately, she lacks the imagination to listen. Leading a government captured by gender ideology woo-woo, she assumes her critics are arguing in bad faith and her ministry has a monopoly on virtue. This is as modern as it is unhealthy.

Bravely, Scotland is henceforth a country in which the sensitivities of some sex offenders now trump those of women. This is not just an SNP problem, because it extends across a Scottish parliament whose members are so desperate to be on "the right side of history" they outsource their critical faculties to government-funded third-sector organisations who then petition the government in support of the government's own legislative proposals. That's how you can stitch up a bill before it's even tabled.

Sturgeon argues her legislation grants no new rights to trans people but it undoubtedly offers new opportunities to people who might wish to take advantage of a simplified process by which they may change their legal sex. Hitherto, obtaining a gender recognition certificate (GRC) has required a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria — the profound mismatch between a person's biological reality and their conception of themselves — and two years living in their

> The first minister doesn't understand because she chooses not to hear

"acquired gender". Sturgeon considers this a degrading, intrusive, humiliating set of requirements. It is a form of gate-keeping.

Her government is all but removing the gate. In most cases, a man may become a woman, or vice versa, with no greater difficulty than signing their name. Feelings trump biological reality. At the dark heart of the argument lies this straightforward, if difficult, question: what is the definition of "trans"? For Sturgeon, and most other MSPs, the answer is amazingly simple: "Anyone who says they are." This is fashionable but no more than that. Since the government anticipates a tenfold increase in the number of people with such a certificate, it seems obvious that the opportunity for mischief is correspondingly enhanced.

This has often proved a maddening debate. The bill's proponents have refused to meet its critics' arguments, preferring to escape them on a wave of wishful thinking. Sometimes, navigating this debate has felt like being trapped in a labyrinth of mirrors from which there is, actually, no escape.

Much of the parliamentary process was quietly rigged. Quite rightly, the Holyrood committee considering the bill heard from plenty of transgender witnesses; mystifyingly, it refused to hear oral evidence from female survivors of male violence.

When the UN's special rapporteur on violence against women — a trenchant critic of the bill — was eventually and at the last minute allowed to give evidence, the committee was careful to balance this testimony with a *second* appearance by the UN independent expert on sexual identification and gender identity who, doubtless coincidentally, supports the government's proposals.

Sturgeon has spent years arguing there is no clash between the rights of trans people and those of women. Presented with evidence of precisely such a conflict, the first minister denies its existence. In such fashion is opposition simply wished away.

The problem, Sturgeon says, is predatory men, not trans people. Which is precisely what her opponents say too. Why, then, would any government wish to make it easier for male predators to access women's spaces? The response is instructive: bad actors would target women anyway so arguing this legislation makes it easier for them to do so is, in a broad sense, irrelevant.

KEN JACK/GETTY IMAGES



First minister Nicola Sturgeon protests that she is a "feminist to her fingertips"

Kenny Gibson, one of the few SNP members to vote against the bill, asked a good question: "If a fox said it was a chicken, would you put it in a hen house?" For this he was accused of "borderline hate speech" but there is no way of avoiding the reality that gender ideologues — including Sturgeon — answer his question in the affirmative. This is squalid and extraordinary in equal measure.

Maleness is the problem, not being trans. For instance, trans women prisoners typically fit male, not female, patterns of criminality. Sometimes biology cannot be bucked and 50 per cent of trans prisoners in Scotland only acquired their new gender identity after their arrest. This is, to be sure, a small sample size but also a mightily suggestive one. Rather than address this, Sturgeon says inconvenient questions are simply "not valid".

Doublethink abounds. In court, the Scottish government argues a GRC changes sex "for all purposes" but in parliament ministers insist it is only a piece of paper of no great significance whatsoever. Bafflingly, it is now possible for an individual to be simultaneously male and female in Scotland. A trans woman — that is, a biological male — may be considered a woman for the

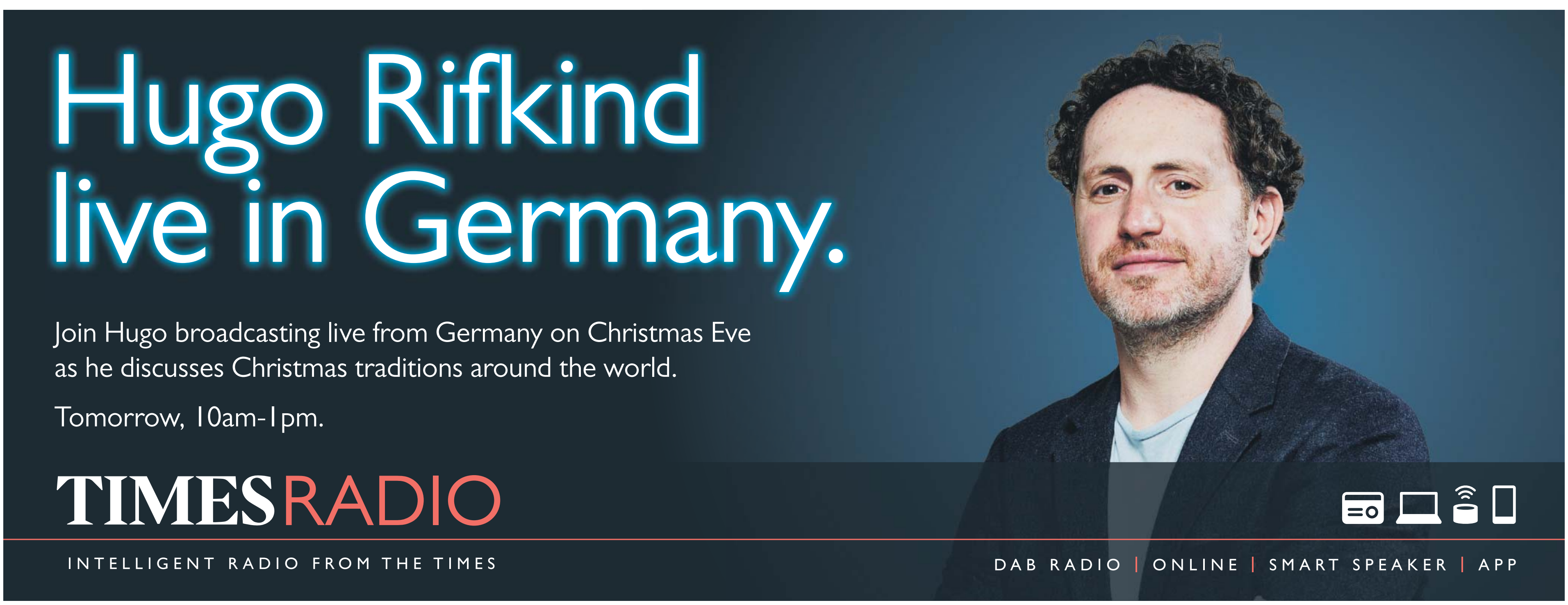
> It's now possible for a person to be both male and female in Scotland

purposes of achieving gender-balance in public sector boardrooms while still being reckoned a man if they seek access to single-sex spaces protected under the terms of the Equality Act.

"In that circumstance," says Shona Robison, the minister responsible for stuffing this turkey through parliament, "they might be a genuine trans woman trying to enter a service that excludes them."

And there you have it: when ministers talk about "genuine" trans women they implicitly accept the prospect — indeed the reality — of "non-genuine" trans women. It is not obvious how service providers, or the Scottish prison service or anyone else, are supposed to distinguish between these two types of trans people.

What happens in Scotland does not stay in Scotland. The impact of Sturgeon's gender reforms on UK equalities law remains untested. Equally, Sir Keir Starmer's Labour is committed to introducing self-ID in England. Should that happen, it would be wise to learn from Scotland's experience. By all means be kind, but be better too. A lot better.



Comment

Slower social mobility is breeding nepo babies

To reduce middle-class nepotism we need a growing economy that creates more room at the top

Emma Duncan



Never mind Hunter Biden's laptop: the story that has really got America going is "nepo babies". The term is the talk of the town since New York magazine published a cover story this month on the children of Hollywood stars who, irrespective of their abilities, parlay their inherited fame into careers in the parental business: Lily-Rose Depp, daughter of Johnny and Vanessa Paradis; Zoë Kravitz, daughter of Lenny and Lisa Bonet; Mason Lee, star of his father Ang's biopic of Bruce Lee. The list of famous people I have never heard of who are related to famous people I have barely heard of is long.

Britain, never far behind America when it comes to the latest trend, has its own nepo babies. Lily Allen, daughter of the actor Keith Allen, claimed the title before it was foisted on her. As a good singer, however, she's not a prime exhibit. A worthier candidate is Brooklyn Beckham, a young man who despite having no visible talent and few achievements beyond a book of blurry elephant photos boasts 14.6 million Instagram followers. Damian Hurley, a 20-year-old film director who wisely cast his mum, Elizabeth, in his first short, is also a contender.

It's hardly news that stars beget stars but the story touched a nerve on both sides of the Atlantic, perhaps in part because technology has heightened this tendency. Cameraphones and social media mean that celebrity offspring are born famous, and since attention is money in the digital economy, they start life well ahead.

Yet I suspect another reason the story has become a talking point is that the inheritance of privilege — whether in Hollywood or in the world of well-paid professionals — is such a live issue politically. Nepo babies are a celebrity version of the broader story of people who have made it then using their resources to give their children a leg-up: private schools, in Dior shades.

Advancement is a zero-sum game these days. In the film business, it

> These days the status of your family can go down as well as up

was ever thus. Only a limited number of people can be famous at any one time. Each new celebrity makes the existing ones slightly less famous, which is why Hollywood is such a viciously competitive place. (If you want a friend in Hollywood, get a dog, as the saying goes.)

The world of well-paid professionals didn't use to be like that. For much of the second half of the 20th century, as low-skilled occupations gave way to higher skilled ones, nice middle-class gigs were expanding as a proportion of available employment and lots of people rose from the working classes to become white-collar workers and professionals.

That changed in the latter part of the 20th century. Middle-class jobs stopped expanding and social mobility became a two-way street: these days the status of your family can go down as well as up. For every working-class kid who makes it into the middle class, a middle-class kid has to slip into the working classes. Professionals therefore find themselves clinging to their social position by their fingernails. Economic pessimism contributes to the fear this engenders. Nearly three-quarters of Britons, according to a recent survey, think that today's children will be worse off than their parents when they grow up.

With fiercer competition for professional jobs, and universities acting as the gateway to those jobs, the children of the well-off need all the help they can get to secure places at the best institutions. So demand for places in top private schools — as measured by decades of above-inflation fee increases — has become increasingly intense. Some in the US took the competition to give their children a leg-up to extremes: three years ago, 35 rich parents, including the actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin, were found to have paid a total of $25 million in bribes to get their children into top colleges.

Since the inheritance of privilege offends against basic notions of fairness, plenty of people would like to suffocate private education. Yet to do so would offend against other principles, such as the liberty to do one's best for one's children — possibly the most fundamental of all freedoms. Its effect would also probably be limited. There are other ways of giving your children a leg-up educationally, such as private tutoring and houses in the catchment area of good state schools.

Anyway, education is not the only route to inheriting privilege. Last week, publishing what's thought to be the biggest study by an employer into social mobility within its organisation, KPMG reported that social class was a bigger barrier to promotion than sex or race. People whose parents were professionals rose through the organisation 19 per cent faster than those whose parents were of a lower social class. So even if privilege is not passed on through schooling, it will find a route to make its way down through the generations.

Since the urge to boost one's offspring's chances is such a powerful driver of human endeavour, erecting barriers to it tends not to work. Communist China took to extremes the destruction of the networks for passing on social privilege. Look where that got it: Xi Jinping, son of one of Mao Zedong's closest aides, is the world's biggest nepo baby.

All of this suggests that Sir Keir Starmer is right to confine his attacks on private schools to the threat to remove their unwarranted charitable status. But it doesn't mean that there is nothing to be done to undermine the inheritance of privilege. Better state schooling limits the power of money to buy educational advantage. London, with state schools that win as many Oxbridge places as top private schools, has shown that it can be done.

And, most importantly, economic growth expands professional opportunities, thus making more room at the top. That is yet another reason why growth needs to be every government's priority.

THUNDERER

Bob Dylan was right to praise the Arctic Monkeys

Tom Ball

When we were at university, my Times colleague George Grylls and I set up and ran a club night dedicated to the musical niche of British indie bands circa 2003 to 2008. This was done with some trepidation. Ten years on from the heyday of bands such as the Maccabees, Wombats and Mystery Jets, it was deemed deeply uncool and juvenile to be into these groups.

So it was with great pleasure, and no small amount of vindication, that I read this week of Bob Dylan's admiration for the Arctic Monkeys and Klaxons, two staples of the British indie scene. For so long maligned by the music press, which would rarely refer to the proliferation of small-town guitar groups throughout the noughties without the epithet of "landfill", it was good to know that one of the great artists of the last century had also listened and taken note.

Two Doors Down, as our night was known, ended up being quite a hit. And as I watched from the DJ booth while our peers launched themselves around the sweat-begrimed walls of the club, and witnessed the flame of romances kindled and quenched within the course of an evening, I would often muse that it was precisely the lack of cool to which we owed our success. No posturing required. Just your dancing shoes and a can of Red Stripe.

To my mind, this in itself — this lack of sophistication — was the essence of British indie. Following in the long tradition set by other British groups such as the Kinks, Madness and Pulp, it was the self-deprecating humour and wry observation that marked out the best of the groups of that time. Though the genre grew out of rock music, there was none of its crotch-cupping machismo. Instead, overlaid on to frantic strumming, lyrics were about dates gone wrong and blokes from Rotherham pretending they're from New York. Imagine Victoria Wood had swapped her piano for three guitars and a drum kit.

In his interview with the Wall Street Journal, Dylan says that he wished more modern music was written with an eye to becoming latter-day standards, timeless melodies to be rerecorded and covered ad nauseam. I think it unlikely that this will be the case for the noughties indie generation. One suspects that couplets such as "I could see your interest wane, my dear/ She wanted Mary Poppins but I took her to King Lear" might struggle to make it into the Great American Songbook. But be that as it may, it is heartening to hear from someone who knows what they're talking about that there is room in the canon for British whimsy.

Tom Ball is northern correspondent

Ann Treneman Notebook

Why being a Christmas panicker is fir the best

'Twas the week before Christmas and all… were in a panic. There are people who make their Christmas cake months in advance and find time to dry oranges to decorate home-made wreaths. However, every year Christmas sneaks up on me like the Ghost of Christmas Present(s) though without, I am happy to say, the Dickensian clanking chains.

The good news? I was so late this year that I got my Christmas tree at 50 per cent off. That's less than £30 for a Nordic spruce that would give the iconic fir tree of Hans Christian Andersen fame a run for its money. The bad news? The only way it would fit into my VW Beetle was to put the top down. Never mind that it was -4C. And I'd left my mittens at home. This doesn't happen to Rudolph, I muttered as I drove home, hands turning blue. Brrrrrr.

Light of men

I do enjoy leafing through those "gifts for men" lists. All cashmere socks, tartan whisky flasks and key organisers. I have my own top tips in this category, honed over years of buying for my brothers-in-law. I admit to having no natural ability to know what men want (I have sisters and daughters) but suspect they are all sick of socks (especially novelty ones) and booze. I also think that the trend to give "experiences" (ie jumping out a plane wearing a onesie etc) is terrifying for most people.

So here, then, is my Christmas panic gift-buying guide for men. Top tip: don't be sniffy about anything that lights up. My best ever purchase was a beanie hat with a light attached to the forehead area. It had a definite potholer vibe. Perfect for those late-night trips to the bins or the garage that men have to do because they are men, foraging for lightbulbs, booze, Brussels sprout stalks. The gloves that have light-up fingers (for fixing stuff) are also a winner. If in doubt, any tool that can do more than one task — like a screwdriver that doubles as a hammer — will do. I am sure you can see that none of this is stereotypical in the least.



Amazon cruise

It is not that my Christmas panic guide doesn't have standards. There is even a list of Marie Kondo-type questions that must be answered before a gift is bought. First, obviously, when it comes to men, does it light up? Second, for all gifts, could it possibly bring joy at some point (in case of a power cut perhaps). Third, can it be returned in the event it is found wanting. And most important: can it be delivered within two days?

We Christmas panickers used to cruise around department stores, hoovering up gifts, on December 23. Now there are no department stores near Bakewell. So, instead, the most crucial question is: is it on Amazon Prime?

Scandi blanc

An essential part of Christmas panic planning (yes there is such a thing) is to go and see something intensely Christmassy which other people have organised. The original plan was to visit Chatsworth for its "Deep Midwinter: A Nordic Christmas" house tour a few weeks ago but a bout of norovirus saw that off.

I saw it this week though and thought its Scandi vibe was dandy. My favourite bit? A brilliant "ice grotto" cave made of (I am told) chicken wire and papier-mâché, painted white, with trees and a hidden owl and wolf peeking out at us. Ice is very nice when personified.

Blather up

I have had a reader request to gather up our "most hated" words. I await your thoughts. All will be revealed next week.

My word of this week is an old favourite, "blatherskite", which is someone who talks utter nonsense for way too long. Word of the year?

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This is no time for contrarianism on Ukraine

I've seen first hand how Zelensky's forces can win this war, but they can't do so without the unwavering support of the US

Douglas Murray



Is the West's arming of Ukraine working? Yes. How do I know? In part because I have seen it with my own eyes. I was in Ukraine last month, on the front lines of the conflict. In fact I was among the first outsiders into the beleaguered city of Kherson within hours of its liberation from Russian troops.

The effects of Russia's brutal bombardment are visible everywhere but in the southeast they are worst. Driving from Odesa I passed village after village in which every house was shelled, every building destroyed. The few remaining people flitted around like ghosts.

The cities were worse. Strangely, the Russians care about certain cities such as Odesa; for although there is no electricity there, they have not destroyed the city of Catherine the Great. Otherwise there is little they will not do. Last month's Russian retreat was swift but they still had time to booby-trap everything they could. Mykolaiv and Kherson were laced with mines, on roads and off, in public buildings, attached to children's toys — everywhere. Walking through recently deserted Russian trenches we trod especially carefully. Intermittently one would go off.

And just because the Russians had retreated did not mean they would leave the liberated cities alone. While I was in the main square in Kherson speaking with women in the bread queues, the drones and the rockets started coming over again. Down by the water — near the bridge which the Ukrainians so successfully blew up in October — the Russians trained snipers on us. We were relatively lucky while we were there. Heavier munitions started coming in later.

There are several imbalances in this conflict. The first is that Russia has the military might, including the nuclear might and the sheer numbers of troops to throw at this conflict. But Ukraine has something else: it has something to fight for.

> Western weaponry gives them the tools to repel this invasion

Of course, some Russian soldiers are believers in this "special operation". But many others are going to be beleaguered and demoralised. Where are these "Nazis" they were promised?

The Ukrainians by contrast are fighting for everything. At one frontline post, the position of which I cannot reveal, I spoke to a young mother who gave birth in January. She handed her baby over to her own mother when Vladimir Putin invaded a month later and she was called to the front. There has been no rotation since. That might seem unimaginable to you. It was not to her. She is fighting for that child, for her family, her country, her future. It is hard to counter, let alone defeat, motivation like that.

The second thing that the Ukrainians have is a technological advantage. Western weaponry has given them the tools they need to repel this invasion of their country. Russia's military infrastructure, by contrast, has proved as inept as you might expect in such a corrupt country. Because, of course, countries that are corrupt at the head, like Russia, are not only corrupt there. If the head is corrupt then over time everything else becomes so too.

Even the new kit the Russians are acquiring is cruddy stuff compared with what the Ukrainians got. One Ukrainian soldier showed me a helmet recently worn by a Russian soldier. The blood and the brains were still wet inside, but the important thing was that the bullet that killed the man had gone in one side of the helmet and clean out the other. The kit was Chinese. The Chinese are selling the Russians Chinese tat. Perhaps they will sort that out between themselves some day.

Despite several things now being to the Ukrainians' advantage, there are, completely predictably, those in the West who are now quibbling about our military support. Much of this is coming from the political right in Europe and America — two Republican members of the House of Representatives reiterated their objection to Ukraine getting any more US money as Volodymyr Zelensky spoke to Congress on Wednesday.

> In US politics today, what the other side is doing must be wrong

There are several reasons for this. One is that this is happening under the Biden administration and in American politics today, whatever the other side is doing must by necessity be wrong. Another is a reactive sense on the American right in particular that Ukraine is this month's narrative priority. Last month it was the LGBT flag or trans rights, this month we're all meant to fly the Ukrainian flag. I understand that cynicism and that irritation at the narrative shift, but contrarianism does not add up to a foreign policy.

As I have repeatedly challenged my right-wing friends across Europe and America in recent months, what else would you do?

Would you rather have allowed Putin to succeed in Ukraine? In which case you can be certain that this winter would be spent trying to work out which country he was going to invade next. Would you rather we intervened ourselves? I don't see much appetite for that on left or right. So arming our allies — arming them against an avowed foe — is the cheapest as well as the most effective way to be involved in this war: to give a proud people the tools to fight for themselves. I cannot tell you the pride in the eyes of the Ukrainian artillery when they show you what they have to pound the Russian lines with compared with what is coming back at them.

We have horrible challenges domestically in Britain, Europe and America. But the Ukrainians have worse. I understand why people get suspicious of narrative shifts. And why they get bored of narratives that run on too long. This isn't the time for such frivolous reactionaryism. This conflict requires comparatively little of us. But what we are doing prevents millions of other people from seeing something you should just pray you never have to see yourself.

Gerard Baker is away

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to
letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to
1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Scottish gender law

Sir, Your leading article ("Collision Course", Dec 22) reveals the real reason why Nicola Sturgeon was so determined to push through the Scottish Gender Recognition Reform Bill. It will set the Scottish government on yet another headlong collision with the UK government, in which Sturgeon will no doubt claim that Westminster is denying the democratic will of the Scottish people — except of course, in this case there is no such will, as opinion polls have demonstrated. I have been shocked by the amount of parliamentary time allocated to debating this ill-thought-out adventure when so many public services in Scotland are under threat.
John A Sibbald
Edinburgh

Sir, In forcing through the gender bill Nicola Sturgeon has shown her contempt for the majority of the Scottish electorate. It is to be hoped that JK Rowling will be correct in her assessment of the impact on Scottish politics, that it will be Sturgeon's "poll tax" moment. Those who wrongly gave Sturgeon the benefit of the doubt will finally see the SNP for what it is, an exhausted one-trick pony, and will vote this incompetent SNP/Scottish Greens government out of office.
Stan Hogarth
Strathaven, South Lanarkshire

Harmful language

Sir, I wish Stanford University well in its effort to eliminate harmful language from its computer code ("US college to erase phrases 'causing harm'", Dec 21). The company I worked for carried out an annual audit of all files for inappropriate language. This resulted in hundreds of references to sex. This was where one word or code ended in "s" and was followed by one starting with "ex".
Colin Macduff-Duncan
Oxshott, Surrey

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

Corrections and clarifications

● We wrongly suggested that the military was due to stand in for firefighters (leading article, Dec 19). In fact no strikes have been announced by the fire service.
● We wrongly reported that the Royal Astronomical Society had called James Webb a bigot (news, Dec 21). The society is still deliberating on accusations against him.

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Grasping the nettle of health service reform

Sir, James Kirkup highlights the lack of attention given to keeping people out of hospital ("Who has the courage to fix our failing NHS?", Dec 22). The £4.6 billion spent on managing osteoporotic fractures, rather than preventing them, is a case study in the same costly short-termism. Half of women over 50 will suffer fractures as a result of osteoporosis, with as many people dying of related causes as from lung cancer and diabetes. The burden on the NHS is immense: a million acute hospital days per year for hip fracture patients and 123,000 hours of operating theatre time. These fractures are preventable as a result of safe, effective medications that are highly affordable for the National Health Service. But the postcode lottery for local fracture services is causing 90,000 patients every year to miss out on vital treatment, putting them at heightened risk of injury and mortality.

Until we recognise that we are spending money in the wrong place — managing the costs of failure rather than preventing harm — there will never be enough funding to keep the system afloat.
Craig Jones
CEO, Royal Osteoporosis Society

Sir, James Kirkup asks: "Will any politician, of any party, say publicly what they all privately accept: property should be part of social care funding?" The short answer is yes. I did, in a Centre for Policy Studies paper in 2019. I have been told by successive ministers since that it is too complicated to set up an insurance system funded by premiums paid out of housing equity (for those who have such equity). I don't believe them, and will keep arguing the case that it is fairer to use a proportion of housing wealth to pay towards social care than increasing taxes on the working age population.
Damian Green MP
House of Commons

Sir, I worked for 54 years in the front line of the NHS at tertiary, secondary and primary levels. It is clear to me that standards of care have been falling since the NHS and Community Care Act of 1990, when service principles were subordinated to (or put in constant tension with) business and market principles. Since then the NHS has become increasingly centralised and bureaucratic. Collaboration, communication and continuity of care have been undermined, with increasing concerns about patient safety and staff morale, aggravated by increased demands and inappropriately reduced capacity.

Among the solutions should be a return to a professionally led and locally organised service with government support, as envisaged and implemented by Aneurin Bevan and the founders of the NHS.
Dr Edward H Reynolds
Former consultant neurologist to the Maudsley and King's College Hospitals, Epsom Hospital and the Integrated Care Partnership, Epsom

Sir, We need to address the retention issue among doctors and nurses. Simply put, there is too much turnover of highly trained staff. The NHS spends significant sums training medical staff, only for them to leave for better paid and less stressful jobs. This places further pressure on already overstretched colleagues. The NHS and its political masters are failing to tackle retention, yet the benefits of doing so — the improved health of the population and consequently higher productivity — are obvious.
Justin Richards
Hitchin, Herts

Press scrutiny role and new data code

Sir, The professional UK news media's ability to hold the government to account, as they did over the Downing Street parties, and to send hundreds of journalists to bear witness abroad, as they did in Ukraine, could be severely compromised by new proposed rules around data protection ("Unfree Press", leading article, Dec 21; letter, Dec 22).

Common sense would suggest that reporters are not data processors, and should not be bogged down in yet more compliance — as the new code from the Information Commissioner's Office proposes. UK journalists are already frequently silenced by the threat of expensive privacy and libel litigation if they scrutinise the powerful. This data code would provide oligarchs and corrupt billionaires the world over with yet more avenues for legal challenge, which most news publishers can ill afford to defend.

Requiring reporters to provide an audit trail to justify holding even the most innocuous public information would severely curtail their ability to provide the watchdog role that the public rightly expects them to perform.
Dominic Ponsford
Editor-in-chief, *Press Gazette*

Philosophy's slide

Sir, Peter Bottomley is to be congratulated on his concern for religious education (Thunderer, Dec 21; letter, Dec 22). Nothing is more important, and less regarded, than introducing children at an early age to some of the "big" spiritual questions that confront us. He would do us all a favour if he were to pursue this interest further by examining the state of philosophy teaching in the UK, where the closure of so many excellent departments over the past 30 years and, in some cases, the casual degrading of the quality and content of the material taught, has led to a lamentable state of affairs. Ideas and beliefs about our place in the world ought to be nourished in the young. So should be the ability to think about and express them in an intellectually coherent and critical way.
Drew Clode
London N8

Political optimism

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein asserts that optimism wins through (Dec 21; letters, Dec 22). I disagree. I feel sorry for optimists as life must be a big disappointment for them as their hopes and plans fall short of their expectations. As a pessimist, I anticipate the things that can go wrong and take action to avoid the dangers ahead. As a result things generally nearly always turn out better than expected, leading to a happy and satisfying life. Sadly our leaders do not look that far ahead. We need the pessimists: they make good managers and leaders as they have vision and overcome obstacles.
John Alldritt
Swanage, Dorset

Sir, May I thank Daniel Finkelstein for cheering me up? The contrast between his optimistic view of Britain and Nigel Farage's pessimism reminded me of McLandburgh Wilson's glorious pronouncement: "The optimist sees the doughnut. But the pessimist sees the hole."
Bernard Kingston
Biddenden, Kent

250,000 WORKLESS WOMEN

FROM THE TIMES DECEMBER 23, 1922

The outlook for the unemployed women is becoming daily more serious. In December there were 189,900 women registered as out of work, an increase of 13,900 on October. This figure is far from the total, which is about a quarter of a million. Householders are crying out for domestic servants and every time the women's unemployment figures are printed, letters pour in from overworked mothers who are irritated that unemployed factory workers should not at once seek the oldest form of woman's work. It is hard not to sympathize, but there is more than one side to the question. Before the war the factory worker would not for a moment have been considered as a domestic servant. The household worker was of a gentler class; the factory worker was usually the child of factory hands or unskilled labourers. The idea of recruiting from these girls is a new one. It has been done with the aid of a brief training by the Central Committee on Women's Employment, but that will have to cease on March 31 unless the Minister of Labour can see his way to the allocation of a further grant. Over 10,000 women have been trained, and nearly 70 per cent entered domestic service, for the most part successfully.

How difficult it would be to take unemployed women without training into an ordinary house and expect them to grasp its work and routine may be realized from a few particulars concerning London's unemployed women. Many have never lived in a house; one room has been the circuit of their lives — eating, cooking, and sleeping; they know nothing of the amenities of family life, of the laying of table-cloths, the meal of several courses, or of the preparation of other than coarse foods. Their ideas of bed-making are primitive, and the care of possessions unknown to them. In the East End there are 800 unemployed women rope-makers. There are 300 makers of upholstery buttons who have been out of work for two years; many are widows with dependent children. They have exhausted their unemployment benefit and are existing on Poor Law relief. Things are as bad, or even worse, in the country. Not all these women are suited for domestic service; some are old and toil-worn, others unadaptable, but from the young there are still thousands willing and eager to train.

THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

Rewriting history

Sir, Your report on censorship of royal records is to be welcomed ("Royal family 'on mission to rewrite history'", Dec 22). Though there are signs of greater openness at the Royal Archives, far too many important records are still unnecessarily closed, even after freedom of information requests. Some 500 records at the National Archives relating to the royal family, most of which seem completely innocuous, remain closed, and those are just the ones we know about. Only this week I was refused a file relating to gliding training for Prince Andrew 1975-1966 because I was told it would put the safety of the royal family in jeopardy, and I have just represented myself at a tribunal after the Information Commissioner upheld the Metropolitan Police's refusal to release a protection file from the 1930s, for the Prince of Wales, on the same grounds. One of the worst offenders for freedom of information is the Cabinet Office, which is ostensibly in charge of it. If our history, including royal history, is to be written accurately, many more records need to be made available — not just those a government department believes we should have.
Dr Andrew Lownie FRHistS
London SW1

Nurturing souls

Sir, James Marriott extols Gladstone's attention to his inner life, including his love of the Classics, but says it is not fair to compare any other PM to him ("Victorians knew how to nurture their souls", Dec 22). However, a pertinent comparison must lie with Churchill, who, having been informed that Gladstone read Homer for fun, observed: "I thought it served him right." Given Churchill's considerable learning and immense output of literature and art, it is hard to argue that he neglected his spiritual side.
Dr Julian Critchlow
Ditcham, Hants

Great all-rounder

Sir, While Muhammad Ali was probably the greatest boxer (letter, Dec 22), as the greatest sportsman I would nominate CB Fry, who as well as being an outstanding cricketer (he captained England six times, and had a batting average of over 50 and a bowling average of under 30), also played for England at football, equalled the world record for the long jump, and was a decent shot putter, hammer thrower, ice skater and golfer.
Roland Smith
Worthing, W Sussex

Stocking filler

Sir, I continued to arrange for Father Christmas to deliver filled stockings to my adult children whenever they woke up in my house on Christmas morning (letter, Dec 21). My visiting parents were delighted to discover that stockings also turned up for them.
Alyson Bumby
London SW8

This carol rocks

Sir, After reading the letter (Dec 22) from my former colleague Raymond Plunkett about singing *While Shepherds Watched* to the tune of *The House of the Rising Sun*, I tried it. It's spot on — but even better the other way round.
Ian Yates
Naburn, York

Daily Universal Register

UK: Royal Mail staff begin a two-day strike and Border Force staff start strike action till Boxing Day; the Christmas No 1 single is announced by Official Charts.

Nature notes



There was an early Christmas present for keen birdwatchers on the North Sea off Redcar. In among the drifting flotilla of gulls and the more usual eiders, a rare vagrant was riding the rough waves. This king eider had come all the way from the tundra ponds and lakes of its circumpolar breeding grounds. Perhaps king eiders are the most colourful of all seabirds, eclipsing even the puffin. Females have a brown cryptic plumage designed to keep them hidden from Arctic foxes. Males have a black and white body; a powder blue head, nape and neck; and green cheeks. Their beak is red, and their large protruding forehead is yellow. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Dame Carol Ann Duffy, *pictured*, poet laureate (2009-19), *Ritual Lighting* (2014), and professor of contemporary poetry, Manchester Metropolitan University, 67; **Emperor Akihito of Japan**, who reigned from 1989 to 2019, 89; **Matt Baker**, TV presenter, BBC1, *Countryfile*, 45; **Lord (Michael) Briggs of Westbourne**, justice of the Supreme Court, 68; **Carla Bruni-Sarkozy**, singer-songwriter, first lady of France (2008-12), 55; **Baroness (Caroline) Chisholm of Owlpen**, baroness-in-waiting (government whip) (2021-Feb 2022), 71; **Lord (Richard) Dannatt MC**, president of Help for Heroes (2011-19), constable of the Tower of London (2009-16), chief of the general staff (2006-09), 72; **David Davis**, Conservative MP for Haltemprice and Howden, Brexit secretary (2016-18), 74; **Sir Peter Davis**, life vice-president, Marie Curie Cancer Care, chief executive, J Sainsbury (2000-04), 81; **Chris Elmore**, Labour MP for Ogmore, opposition whip, 39; **Lord (Jo) Johnson of Marylebone**, Conservative MP for Orpington (2010-19), minister for universities, science, research and innovation (2019), 51; **Baroness (Jenny) Jones of Moulsecoomb**, Green Party politician, deputy mayor of London (2003-04), 73; **Bob Kahn**, electrical engineer, one of the "fathers of the internet", 84; **Jorma Kaukonen**, guitarist, Jefferson Airplane, 82; **Prof Margaret MacMillan OM**, historian, warden of St Antony's College, Oxford (2007-17), *War: How Conflict Shaped Us* (2020), 79; **Perminder Mann**, chief executive, Bonnier Books UK, 51; **Carol Smillie**, TV presenter, *Changing Rooms* (1996-2003), 61; **Donna Tartt**, novelist, *The Goldfinch* (2013; Pulitzer prize), 59; **Geoffrey Wheatcroft**, author and journalist, *The Controversy of Zion* (1996), *Churchill's Shadow: An Astonishing Life and a Dangerous Legacy* (2021), 77.

On this day

In **1931** Wilson Bentley, a US meteorologist known as Snowflake Bentley, died aged 66 of pneumonia caught in a blizzard. He was a pioneer of photomicrography, and captured more than 5,000 images of snow crystals, identifying that each flake was unique.

The last word

"Love is like the wild rose-briar:/ Friendship like the holly-tree:/ The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms/ But which will bloom most constantly?" Emily Brontë, novelist and poet, *Love and Friendship* (1846)

Wounded Bear

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has taken such a toll on its military and economy that even if the war ended tomorrow it would need a generation to restore its strength

As Volodymyr Zelensky was fêted in Washington on Wednesday as the first foreign war-time leader since Churchill to address both chambers of Congress, Vladimir Putin was delivering his own address to a room full of glum-faced generals at the Ministry of Defence in Moscow. The Russian president acknowledged that September's partial mobilisation had not gone smoothly, after reports of new recruits sent to the front with poor equipment and inadequate training. The previous day, Putin admitted to spy chiefs that the situation in Ukraine was "extremely complicated". But his message was that "the country, the government will give everything that the army asks for, everything". Russia had "no limitations" on its military spending, he reassured his top brass.

That, of course, is not strictly true. The reality is that the war, and the cumulative effect of western sanctions, has severely weakened Russia's military and its economy. Kyiv is reckoned to have destroyed half of Russia's tanks, and the Russian stockpiles of missiles, ammunition and shells has been rapidly depleted. The Kremlin is already spending a quarter of its total budget revenue on the military. Government spending has risen by 20 per cent this year, largely as a result of military spending, and it is not clear how much further it can rise given the growing strains on the Russian economy.

Russia has created the illusion of economic resilience this year thanks to war-inflated oil and gas revenues and strict capital controls, which helped to maintain the value of the ruble while filling state coffers. Even so, gross domestic product is estimated to have shrunk by 3 per cent this year. Oil and gas revenues are shrinking, with the price of Russia's Urals crude down 40 per cent from its March peak, and will fall further as new western price caps bite. The budget swung to a 2 per cent deficit last month, forcing the government to dip into its rainy day fund. The bigger the budget deficit, the greater the pressure on the central bank to raise interest rates to defend the ruble, further squeezing the economy.

Western sanctions are having a broader impact on the economy, too. Imports have collapsed by 70 per cent, not only depriving Russians of consumer choice but hitting industrial supply chains as well. Automotive sector output was down nearly 80 per cent in September, reflecting a shortage of components. To circumvent western bans on high-tech exports, businesses appear to be importing washing machines and other household appliances to strip them of components such as microchips. The official unemployment rate is 4 per cent, but 13 per cent of the workforce is part time, or on downtime or unpaid leave.

Perhaps most damagingly, the economy has been hit by a collapse in the workforce as millions — mostly the young and highly skilled — have fled or been drafted. At the same time, the Kremlin has orchestrated a shift to a war economy, obliging key sectors to aid the war effort. This, combined with the loss of foreign competition and investment, will have a chilling long-term effect on innovation and productivity. Real incomes are already 14 per cent lower than in 2014, when Russia first invaded Ukraine, and are bound to fall further in the coming years.

British government officials reckon that it will take Russia 20 or 30 years to rebuild its military strength. Even if the war ended tomorrow, it may take a generation to rebuild Russia's economic strength too. That is a tragedy for the Russian people, though it would be naive, given their history of enduring deprivation and the ruthlessness of Mr Putin's regime, to assume that this might translate into political pressure on Moscow to end the war. But it does point to limits on the Kremlin's ability to continue to sustain its war effort, or provide its army with everything it wants.

Unislamic Rule

The Taliban's latest assault on women's rights is a disaster for Afghanistan

Shortly after the Taliban returned to power in August last year, Boris Johnson, then the prime minister, said he believed that the group were different than when they had first taken power in 1996. It was a hope many shared, and one that was quickly shattered. This week, the Taliban banned girls from attending primary school, excluded women from going to universities, and barred them from working in any forms of educational institutions. It is the latest in a series of devastating blows to women's personal freedoms in Afghanistan, and one that will deepen an already escalating humanitarian crisis.

Extending access for girls and women to education was one of the greatest achievements of the western alliance, justifying the continued presence of allied forces in Afghanistan. In 2001, when the Taliban were forced out, there were no girls enrolled in formal schools. By 2018 there were 3.6 million. Women became participants in public life, holding jobs in government, the media and healthcare. After the chaotic withdrawal of western troops the hope was that these changes could be maintained. The Taliban even promised to implement more moderate rules that would respect the rights of women and minorities. It is now clear that this was a thinly-veiled lie.

Within months, the Taliban began their cruel assault on women and girls. Women have been intensely pressured to wear the conservative burqa, with only a mesh screen to see through, and can no longer travel without a male guardian. In March, the Taliban barred most girls from attending secondary school. Two months ago, they prohibited women from studying certain subjects, such as engineering and economics, at university. Last month, women were barred from entering parks, funfairs, gyms and public baths.

It is a horrifying erosion of women's rights that aims to remove women from public life and makes them vulnerable to early marriages, exploitation and violence. No other Muslim-majority country prevents teenage girls from going to school. It is telling that Saudi Arabia and Turkey have condemned the Taliban's ban, which the Turkish foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, called "neither Islamic nor humane". The truth is that with their draconian rules the Taliban have alienated even the most sympathetic regimes, and made it inconceivable for any nation to recognise them as Afghanistan's legitimate government.

This is disastrous for the Afghan people, who rely on international help to survive. After the Taliban's return to power, much of Afghanistan's development funding and bank reserves were frozen, meaning that 80 per cent of the annual budget evaporated. The resulting collapse of the banking system, with soaring unemployment and a second consecutive severe drought, have caused a humanitarian crisis. More than half of Afghanistan's 39 million people need aid, and 90 per cent do not have enough to eat.

The Taliban's rights record is inexcusable, but the people of Afghanistan deserve our help. This is why one of the three charities of this year's Times and Sunday Times Christmas Appeal is Afghanaid. Since the US withdrawal, Afghanaid has supported 1.5 million people by distributing cash, food parcels, hygiene packs and vital household items such as stoves and blankets, as well as providing emergency shelter. Your donations can help the people of Afghanistan avert further disaster.

Password Protected

Subscription services should crack down on fraudulent log-in sharing

Until now, Netflix has reluctantly indulged the estimated 100 million households accessing its streaming service with shared log-in details. But the free-for-all era of password sharing looks, at last, set to expire. And a good thing too: in this paper's unprejudiced opinion, it is high time that subscription-only services stopped treating those who free-ride by using others' passwords as though they were as good as their word.

In advice published this week, the Intellectual Property Office warned that password-sharers risked breaching copyright law. The IPO cited "a range of provisions in criminal and civil law which may be applicable … where the intent is to allow a user to access copyright-protected works without payment." The most obviously relevant offence, that of "fraudulently receiving programmes", carries a £5,000 fine under the Copyright Act. The Crown Prosecution Service guardedly confirmed that it would reach decisions to prosecute on a "case-by-case basis". Netflix, for its part, has hinted at plans to crack down using information gathered from IP addresses, device IDs, and account activity so as to limit sharing to those who actually live together.

Swapping subscription details may seem harmless, but password sharing undermines a fair and familiar market principle: high-quality goods must command a reasonable price if they are to be produced at all. From streaming platforms to newspapers and magazines, most online media depends on subscription revenue for its viability. And of course it is not only service providers who are wronged by free-riding, but those who actually pay for them, whose subscriptions effectively subsidise the service for everyone else.

On reflection, what's true of memorable password construction applies to password sharing too: the fewer characters involved the better.

World

Trauma of war children who watched parents die



Ukraine's young people are slowly coming to terms with the horrors they have faced, writes **Charlie Faulkner**

It takes a day for Olena Brovchenko to hear children recount the atrocities they have witnessed. It takes another two to recover from what the boys and girls who lived through the horrors of Bucha have told her.

"We were sitting around the table and a boy who had been living in Bucha said quite matter-of-factly: 'My mum was killed in front of me. Then my grandmother had a heart attack and died because of the pain she was in after my mother was killed'," Brovchenko said. "Another little girl in Bucha saw all of the dead bodies in the streets."

Indelible evidence of the atrocities children have witnessed in ten months of war in Ukraine has left psychological scars on a generation. Brovchenko and her chihuahua, Lev Kimberlen, are trying to heal those wounds.

"Before the war I was involved in typical summer camps offering recreational activities," she told The Times. "Now my work is about helping children who've been through horrendous experiences learn to trust again and to help them heal."

As Lev sat on her lap with a Ukrainian flag-coloured bandana around his neck, matching her blue and yellow nail varnish, Brovchenko added: "It's been really hard to find the right words to tell them they are safe. These children have experienced much more than I have."

The United Nations agency for children, Unicef, has warned that tens of thousands of Ukrainian children will be left traumatised by the conflict. While insisting that many children will "bounce back", it has warned that a smaller but "important number" will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) between two and four months after they were traumatised.

Addressing the US Congress on Wednesday, President Zelensky said Ukraine's allies were in a fight for the future of his country. "This struggle will define in what world our children and grandchildren will live, and then their children and grandchildren. It will define whether it will be a democracy of Ukrainians and for Americans, for all."

Nataliia Masiak, a child psychologist who works with the Voices of Children charitable foundation, said PTSD symptoms could include "sleep issues, being overly energetic or aggressive and avoidant behaviours".

Masiak was optimistic that if children had the right support, most would not suffer lasting effects from the horrors they had seen. However, those who do may struggle in work and relationships in later life or with addiction problems.

"Ukrainian children are really resilient and although there's no way we could be ready for a war, life here was already not an easy one," she said. "It's impossible to predict the extent of the impact on Ukrainians' mental health because we're still in the middle of the war. What we do know is that children cope differently — some may continue their life as normal, others could need medical intervention and life-long professional support."

About 350 children attended a summer camp that Brovchenko helped lead in western Ukraine. Art, sport, music and scouting activities were organised alongside therapy sessions. The children, aged between 6 and 16, have lived under Russian occupation, and have either lost parents or their homes, witnessed terrible violence or have family members fighting in the armed forces.

In Bucha, a town on the outskirts of Kyiv, civilians were massacred by the occupying Russian forces. Nine children were among the 458 bodies recovered there, according to the authorities.

Brovchenko's puppy helps the children to talk about their ordeals. "A 15-year-old girl from Mariupol was badly traumatised," she recalled. "She remained silent for the first week until she saw the dog. Suddenly she started to play with him and something just shifted in her."

Despite Brovchenko's cheerful disposition the children's trauma has taken an emotional toll. "A seven-year-old girl saw her father tortured and then shot dead by Russians. She was extremely aggressive when she arrived at the camp. Working with her was really tough but we persisted, built her trust and she gradually started to calm down and interact with others," she said. "She still has a long way to go but it was a promising start."

The iniative was started by Rodyna Ukraina (Family Ukraine), the organisation founded this year by Nazar Zbigley, 35, a lawyer, and seven friends.

Spain's trans law to allow gender change from 14

Spain
Isambard Wilkinson Madrid

Spain has approved a law allowing anyone aged 16 or over to change their gender without parental consent.

The bill passed the lower house of parliament by 188 to 150 votes and will go to the Senate for final approval. It is expected to become law within weeks.

Children aged 14 and 15 will be allowed to legally change their gender without a medical evaluation but will still need their parents' consent. Those aged 12 and 13 will need permission from the courts. The law also bans conversion therapy, imposes fines for attacks on LGBT people and overturns a ban on lesbian couples registering children under both parents' names.

Transgender people in Spain previously needed a diagnosis by several doctors of gender dysphoria, which is the psychological condition of not feeling a match between one's biological sex and gender identity. In some cases they also needed proof they had been living for two years as the gender with which they identified — or records showing they had taken hormones.

The law has divided the coalition government. Senior members of the ruling Socialist party say the bill poses a threat to women's safety. Podemos, their far-left coalition partner, drafted the law and has criticised opposition to it as transphobic.

The Podemos equality minister, Irene Montero, said: "At last this law depathologises trans lives and guarantees trans people's rights." She added: "Trans women are women."

Carmen Calvo, a Socialist deputy prime minister who led opposition to the law, argued it would erode women's rights because legally the concept of biological sex would be replaced by that of gender.

"I agree that there is a need for a law, but not this law," said Calvo, who abstained in the vote. She previously raised fears the law would undermine equality legislation and be difficult to interpret and apply.

Alberto Núñez Feijóo, leader of the People's Party, the main conservative opposition, said the law was "a frivolity that affects the rights of women and the rights of children" and that it treated some of the "basic principles of human dignity . . . as a joke". He has vowed to repeal it if his party wins next year's elections.

More than a dozen countries have adopted similar legislation. Scotland's parliament approved a bill yesterday making it easier to change legal gender and lowering the minimum age to 16.

French sang

France
Charles Bremner Paris

About 200,000 passengers have had their trains cancelled for the Christmas weekend after ticket inspectors went ahead with a strike that has angered the usually tolerant French.

The stoppage by a "collective" of *contrôleurs de train* has forced the SNCF state operator to cancel a third of trains.

The SNCF is reimbursing cancelled tickets at double their cost, but with public transport already at capacity, car travel is the only alternative. Thousands scrambled for any remaining places on trains yesterday before the

Emily in trouble over her product placements
Page 39



I'll prove DeSantis stole election, says Trump ally
Page 40



CHARLIE FAULKNER FOR THE TIMES; ROMAN PILIPEY/EPA; JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP



A therapy dog called Lev is helping survivors of Russian war crimes in Bucha, above, and fighting elsewhere in Ukraine to open up about their ordeals. The conflict is a pivotal moment for the future of democracy, President Zelensky told the US Congress this week



"The catalyst was our concern for our children during this war," the father of two said. "I was under Russian occupation with my family in Bucha for 11 days. My son was born on the morning war broke out. My son's age is announced on every social media platform every day across Ukraine."

Zbigley and his friends helped to distribute humanitarian aid at first and started an official charity in April. It works with Kyiv's military authorities to identify children in need and is funded by local businesses, international partners and donations.

"We carried out an analysis of the children with qualified mental health professionals and found 85 per cent of the 350 children had [PTSD]," Zbigley said. Rodyna Ukraina continues to organise weekend events and other support for the children.

● A German foreign intelligence agent is being held on suspicion of spying for Russia. The officer, identified as Carsten L, was arrested on Wednesday in Berlin. His home was searched along with the offices of the Federal Intelligence Service in Berlin and Pullach, near Munich. He is accused of passing intelligence to Moscow this year.

This is no time for contrarianism on Ukraine, Douglas Murray, page 33

Inside the fentanyl factories that churn out death across US

United States
Keiran Southern Los Angeles

In the basement of an apartment complex in Inglewood, Los Angeles, a metallic hum rings out as high-speed pill-pressing machines pump out thousands of tablets an hour, each laced with a deadly synthetic opioid.

The drugs are ready to be packaged and sold in their millions to customers across America through the dark web.

That was before the clandestine factory was dismantled last month as part of a war on what prosecutors say is a sprawling criminal network.

Mexican cartels, often importing materials from China or India, have flooded US cities with fentanyl, the synthetic opioid fuelling an overdose crisis that is killing Americans on an unprecedented scale. Of the more than 107,000 overdose deaths last year, about two thirds have been attributed to drugs such as fentanyl.

Fentanyl is an indiscriminate killer, according to the FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration — victims are old and young, rich and poor, living in cities and small towns. While many who die are addicts, others are casual users who buy what they believe are drugs such as Xanax, a tranquiliser, and OxyContin, a painkiller, only to ingest a fatal quantity of fentanyl.

The danger is particularly acute in Los Angeles. The cartels use the city as a distribution hub, smuggling in fentanyl — in powdered form or tablets — before it is sent across the country.

Underground labs such as the one uncovered in Inglewood can produce millions of cheap, counterfeit fentanyl-laced pills often disguised to look like prescription painkillers such as oxycodone. The Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels can also produce fentanyl pills for about 13 cents each in Mexico before they are sold for $15 to $30 in the US.

Fentanyl can be 50 times more powerful than heroin, with a dose equal to 10 to 15 grains of table salt enough to prove fatal. This potency makes the drug uniquely dangerous, according to Don Alway, the assistant director at the FBI Los Angeles office.

"While there can be specific instances of one use of an illicit drug causing overdose and death, traditionally we don't see that," he said. "That's why the phrase 'one pill can kill' is so significant. Because the number of folks that end up dying from a single dose [of fentanyl] is staggering. And many of these victims don't realise what they're taking."

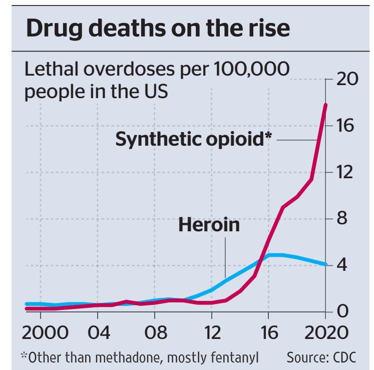
The victims of fentanyl include Melanie Ramos, 15, who died in a school lavatory in Hollywood in September after taking what she thought was a Percocet, a painkiller that is sometimes abused. In May a British man died from fentanyl poisoning while on a family holiday to Disney World in Florida.

Alway said that no family is safe because of the drug's ubiquity. The FBI and other law enforcement agencies continue to take vast quantities off the streets and the amount seized this year was enough to kill every American.

In the case of the Inglewood factory that was shut down by investigators in November, a Los Angeles man, Christopher Hampton, 36, faces a life sentence after being charged with various narcotics and weapons offences. He is accused of operating anonymously on the dark web and unwittingly selling drugs to an undercover agent.

Federal agents allegedly recovered more than 20,000 multi-coloured pills containing fentanyl — so-called "skittles" manufactured to resemble oxycodone pills — from his home.

Despite such successes, Alway said law enforcement agencies alone cannot stem the tide of overdoses. Chelsea Shover, of the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, said enforcement had to be balanced with education of the public about the drug's dangers.



froid tested by rail strike

strike. The worst-hit services are the high-speed TGV lines, the mainstay of long-distance rail travel.

At least half of trains were cancelled from Paris to Rennes, Bordeaux and Marseilles. Half the services to Spain and a third to Italy were cancelled. Eurostar was already facing disruption because of the British rail strike.

The rare Christmas strike, and a stoppage planned for the new year weekend, have been organised mainly on Facebook by disgruntled *contrôleurs* unhappy with a 12 per cent pay increase negotiated by unions. The main rail unions are not supporting the strike.

The tolerance usually shown by the French towards their striking rail workers has been replaced by exasperation. President Macron said that he "considers the strike to show a total absence of empathy, solidarity and fraternity".

Public anger is being fanned by exasperation over a decline in rail services on all but the expensive high-speed lines. Decades of underinvestment in inter-city and suburban services has led to reduced timetables, overcrowded trains and delays.

Critics blame the culture of privilege among rail workers, most of whom are still guaranteed life-long employment and earlier retirement on better pensions than private sector employees.

Pope warns of demon bearing flowers

The Vatican
Tom Kington Rome

The Pope has warned Vatican officials to watch out for the devil that "lurks among us", calling it an "elegant demon" that appears with a bunch of flowers.

Francis has often used his Christmas address to the cardinals and priests at the Vatican to admonish them for their worldly sins, and this year he did not disappoint.

He told the prelates not to feel holier than thou just because they worked "in the service of the Holy See, at the heart of the Church". He added: "We could easily fall into the temptation of thinking we are safe, better than others."



Francis gave the clergy one of his blunt Christmas messages

That, he said, placed them "in greater danger than all others, because we are beset by the 'elegant demon' who does not make a loud entrance, but comes with flowers in his hand".

The Pope has long cast himself as an outsider surrounded by scheming, gossipy cliques. In 2014, he listed the top 15 vices of Vatican officials, accusing them of "spiritual Alzheimer's" and believing that they were "immortal". Two years later, he alleged that his attempt to bring transparency faced "malicious resistance" inspired by "the devil".

However, as he addressed his audience at the Holy See this year, he apologised for being tough. "Pardon me, brothers and sisters, if at times I say things that may sound harsh and pointed. It is not because I don't believe in the value of kindness and persuasion. Rather, it is because it is good to keep our caresses for the weary and the oppressed," he said.

World

Tiger terrifies pilgrims on temple island

India
Amrit Dhillon Delhi

A mason was on his ladder, repairing a temple roof, when he looked up to see a fully grown Bengal tiger swimming towards him.

He dropped his trowel and ran to raise the alarm in the city of Guwahati, on the islet of Umananda, northeastern India, which is considered the smallest inhabited river island in the world. The adult male tiger is believed to have survived a 75-mile swim down the Brahmaputra river in the state of Assam, and was looking for a place to rest.

As it came ashore, about 40 Hindu pilgrims visiting the temple scattered in panic, perhaps thinking of *Life of Pi*, a novel and film in which a young man is stranded on a boat with a tiger.

The river police and forest department were called and ferries in the river halted. Ashwini Kumar, the forest officer, gathered four vets and 20 colleagues and headed on motor boats towards Umananda, which was previously known as Peacock Island.

They used a spare boat to move the pilgrims and the three priests, who are the island's only permanent residents. Kumar and his team then tranquillised and captured the animal. "The tiger was clearly tired," Kumar said. "He was almost wedged in between the boulders, with his rear facing us. With the river beneath us and a very awkward angle, it was difficult to aim the tranquilliser dart accurately."

They sedated him on the second attempt, lifted him onto a stretcher and took him to Guwahati Zoo for medical observation.

After a seven-hour operation, Kumar said: "We sighed with relief and laughed about it over a nice cup of tea."

CHRISTOPHE PETIT TESSON/EPA



Green giant **The Christmas tree at the Galeries Lafayette department store in Paris is at the heart of a sound and light show**

Allies join outcry over Taliban's ban

Afghanistan
Abbie Cheeseman

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, two of the three countries that recognise the Taliban government, have condemned its decision to ban women from attending university. Pakistan, the third country, has not commented on the decree.

About two dozen women staged a protest in Kabul yesterday, and several Afghan cricketers criticised the ban.

The Taliban, who took control of the country in August last year, announced this week that women would be barred from studying at public and private universities with immediate effect.

Saudi Arabia, which until 2019 enforced restrictions on women's travel, employment and other aspects of their daily life including driving, expressed "astonishment and regret" and urged the Taliban to change course.

Mevlut Cavusoglu, the Turkish foreign minister, said the ban was "neither Islamic nor humane", adding: "What harm is there in women's education? Our religion, Islam, is not against education; on the contrary, it encourages education and science."

The UAE's foreign affairs ministry said the Taliban's decision "profoundly jeopardises the international community's efforts to engage with the Taliban" and was an example of them trying to "erase" women from public life.

Despite at first promising more moderate rule, the Taliban have banned girls from school, barred women from most employment and ordered them to cover up from head to toe in public. Women are also banned from parks and gyms.

Assault on women's rights is a disaster for Afghanistan, leading articles, page 35

'Kagame's rebel army massacring Hutus'

Democratic Republic of Congo
Charlie Mitchell

Villagers tried to hide behind a school while others fled to the bush when M23 rebels began killing dozens of civilians in the volatile east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The militants opened fire at the church and hospital before looting and torching homes in the villages of Kishishe and Bambo. At least 27 women and girls were raped.

Survivors said the militants forced them to take the bodies of their loved ones and dump them in mass graves. Some walked for days across hilly terrain to reach squalid camps for internally displaced people.

A UN investigation found 131 people were "arbitrarily executed" during last month's massacre, which followed clashes between the mainly Tutsi M23 and FLDR, a local Hutu militia. The Congolese government, whose forces are engaged in armed conflict with the rebels, put the death toll above 300.

Rwanda has been accused by the US, and more recently France and Germany, of backing M23 in its violent campaign in Congo's mineral-rich North Kivu province. The European countries, among Rwanda's biggest donors, are piling pressure on President Kagame, a Tutsi.

"We condemn Rwanda's support for the M23 group," the French foreign ministry said. Christoph Retzlaff, a German official responsible for Berlin's relations with Africa, tweeted that Rwanda should "immediately cease" backing M23.

The fighting, underpinned by long-standing ethnic tensions between the Tutsis and Hutus, has raised fears it could escalate into a broader conflict in the Great Lakes region. Relations between Kigali and Kinshasa have been strained since the 1994 Rwanda genocide, when more than 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and tolerant Hutus were killed by Hutu militias. Rwanda accused the DRC of harbouring Hutu perpetrators.

Rwanda has dismissed M23 as "Congo's problem", saying this week that "attempting to manage complex situations by simply repeating and amplifying false allegations of the [Congolese] government cannot lead to solutions". The M23 militants claim they are defending Congolese Tutsis from Hutu militias active in the region.

American officials have denounced Rwanda's support for the rebels, viewed by some western observers as "Rwanda's Wagner", a reference to the Russian mercenary group.

Kagame has been accused of using M23 to plunder and destabilise eastern Congo, home to the world's largest known deposits of tantalum, used in smartphones and laptops, as well as tin and gold. The UN estimates that more than 90 per cent of Congo's minerals are smuggled into Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi for international sale.

"For several months the US has pointed to Rwanda's support for the M23 rebels. Belgium has recently followed suit. France's position, silent until now, was no longer tenable," said Michael Pauron, an author and expert on French diplomacy in Africa.

Britain, which signed an agreement this year to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, has declined to rebuke the country but is contributing £500,000 to African-led mediation efforts in Nairobi. "It's not surprising that the UK has not made any statements. They don't really want to piss off Rwanda as long as the latter is willing to be paid to take on immigrants," a western diplomat said. The Foreign Office has called for a "de-escalation from all sides" and said the advances by M23 fighters were "hampering humanitarian access".

In an M23 insurgency in 2012, with the rebels encircling the Congolese regional capital Goma, the UK, US, Netherlands and others froze aid to Rwanda. M23 withdrew. This conflict could be far worse. The 2,000-strong group is about 12 miles from Goma. The fighting has displaced more than a quarter of a million people, and two million are running short of food and fuel.

M23 takes its name from March 23, 2009, the date of a peace deal between a powerful militia and the government of Congo, but according to the UN it was set up by Rwanda a decade ago. "In the eyes of Rwandan former army personnel, the M23 is a de facto branch of the Rwandan army, an expression of Kagame's determination to show his regional rivals who calls the shots," Michela Wrong, a Rwanda scholar, wrote this week. Pauron said: "I think nothing is done without Kagame being involved in some way."

France's statement follows a thaw in relations between the two countries, which fell out when Rwanda accused France of failing to prevent the genocide. Pauron said last month's massacre was likely to have spurred France's gear-change.



Gambia coup plot thwarted

Richard Assheton Lagos

Four soldiers in the Gambia have been arrested after a coup attempt, the government reported. Three alleged accomplices were said to be on the run.

Witnesses reported soldiers moving around the presidential house in Banjul, the capital, on Tuesday evening. The rest of the city was calm.

"The situation is under total control," said the government, which had earlier denied rumours of a plot.

The Economic Community of West African States, whose leaders agreed this month to form an armed unit to foil coups, said it "strongly condemns" the alleged plot. There has been a spate of them in the region since 2020.

The Gambia removed the long-serving president Yahya Jammeh democratically in 2016 and replaced him with Adama Barrow, a political novice who had previously been an Argos security guard in London.

Barrow, 57, had promised to rule for three years but was re-elected for a five-year term last year. In April he lost his majority in parliament after he abandoned the party that had propelled him to power to found a new one and formed an unlikely alliance with Jammeh's old party.

Those behind the alleged plot may have links to Jammeh, 57, who was forced into exile after his downfall but still has supporters.

Emily in trouble over product placements

France

Adam Sage Paris

Emily in Paris, the popular Netflix series, is at the centre of controversy in France about its product placement policy.

Take, for instance, its portrayal of a French McDonald's as chic, clean and admired by a top chef. The depiction of the chain, which has an array of macaroons on the menu of its outlet in the Champs-Élysées in the series, sparked indignation in the media. Detractors denounced it as a mendacious attempt to make fast food seem gastronomic.

Thomas Sotinel, 64, Le Monde's eminent film critic, was aghast. He said the first episode of the third season of the romantic comedy, where the implausibly sophisticated McDonald's makes an appearance, was "in part dedicated to the promotion" of the chain, which reportedly paid Netflix to feature in a positive light in the series.

However, the product placements did not stop there. To Sotinel's dismay, his own newspaper also features in the third season of *Emily in Paris*.

He described the discovery as an "embarrassing moment", which is understandable as he says the series makes Paris look like a "theme park for American tourists" and that it "rests upon the belief that all banalities take on a crazy charm if they are spoken in French with a Chicago accent".

Le Monde's weekly magazine, called M, appears in the fifth episode when the heroine of the series — Emily Cooper, played by Lily Collins, 33, the British-American actress — finds herself on



Quelle horreur! Emily was pictured on Le Monde's magazine in the series

the front cover. "L'Américaine exceptionnelle", says the headline.

In the storyline, she is selected by Le Monde as one of the most influential people in Paris, to the anger of her French boss, who would have liked to have appeared in the magazine herself.

For Parisians, the episode represented galling evidence that however much they abhor *Emily in Paris*, the series is a monumental commercial success and is difficult to resist. The first season was watched by 58 million households within a month of its release in 2020.

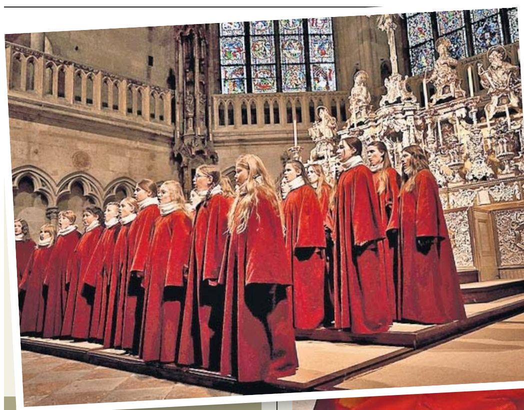
Les Echos, the French financial daily, said firms, notably in the French fashion sector, were falling over themselves to get a mention in the series. Internet searches for Chanel, the French haute couture brand, increased by 30 per cent after it got a mention in *Emily in Paris*. The Carel fashion brand said sales of its Scoubidou bag tripled after Emily was portrayed with one in season two.

McDonald's , for its part, has sought to capitalise on its tie-up with Netflix to launch Le Menu Emily in Paris, which consists of a McBaguette (burgers in a baguette with mustard and Emmental) chips, a drink and two macaroons.

Critics argue that McDonald's is no more sophisticated in France than it is anywhere else. The controversy has fuelled longstanding Parisian claims that the series is little more than an accumulation of clichés about the city, which is shown as drowning in opulence, indolence and adultery.

Télérama, the French version of the Radio Times, described the third season of the series — made by Darren Star, the US director who also created *Sex and the City* — as "grotesque".

However, Sud Ouest, the regional daily in southwest France, said it was better than the previous two seasons. It said Emily had become "more French".



Girls find voice in choir after 1,000 years



CHRISTOF STACHE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The admission of girls to Regensburg's "cathedral sparrows" reflects the momentous changes in Germany's Catholic church since the 1980s

The ritual has been going since Aethelred the Unready sat on the English throne and a pair of scribes first jotted down a poem called *Beowulf* (Oliver Moody writes).

Almost every Advent for the past ten and a half centuries, the choristers of Regensburg in southern Germany have sung the ancient liturgies presaging the birth of Christ. Known as the Domspatzen, or "cathedral sparrows", they are reckoned to be among the oldest continuously active boys' choirs in the world.

This year differs from the others in only one respect: the elite singers on tour are girls.

On the frosty fourth Sunday of Advent in Nuremberg, an hour and a half's drive from Regensburg, the nave of the Frauenkirche resounds with the final lingering harmony from Zoltan Kodaly's *Ave Maria*. Robed in crimson cassocks with white mufflers wrapped up tight against the chill, the 30 choristers look a little startled by the applause that breaks out from the congregation.

Their story reflects the momentous shifts in the German Catholic church. Since the end of the 1980s, the number of Catholics in Germany has fallen by a quarter, and the choral schools at the great cathedrals have one by one begun admitting girls: Cologne, then Mainz and Aachen.

For decades the Domspatzen cleaved to their tradition. In 2017, however, lawyers uncovered 547 historic cases of child abuse at the cathedral's private school, from 1945 to 2010. Sixty-seven of the boys had been subjected to sexual violence by nine members of staff. Pupil numbers went into steep decline. Last year the school announced it would accept its first female students, with a separate boarding wing. The fees remain low by the standards of British public schools — a maximum of €570 a month for full boarding, subsidised by a chunky endowment.

Three months ago it formed a girls' choir under the direction of Elena Szuczies, 28, who had previously worked with female choristers in Cologne. Szuczies said the first intake of girls, aged between 11 and 18, had been "tremendously excited" about joining such a venerable institution. "They're doing a great job and the boys have given them a really good welcome."

Last Sunday they made their debut, first at a morning service in Regensburg cathedral, and then at an evening eucharist in Nuremberg, to an almost full house despite an overlap with the penalty shoot-out at the end of the World Cup final.

Raging Roland is running out of steam

Germany

Oliver Moody Berlin

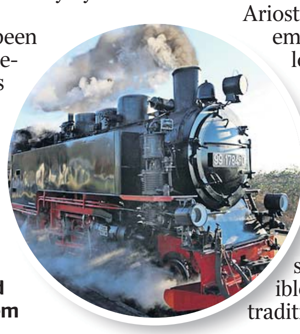
Two of Germany's best-loved steam railway lines may be forced to retire after prices for high-quality coal tripled.

Since the end of the 19th century holidaymakers have used narrow-gauge routes, known colloquially as Raging Roland and Molli the Bathing Train, to shuttle back and forth between the beaches and resorts of the Baltic coast.

This summer was one of the busiest in their history because they were included in a scheme offering passengers unlimited travel on regional public transport for €9 a month.

Yet the operators say that the international energy crunch has created enormous additional costs. The disruption of supplies from Russia and a shift from gas to coal power have driven the coal price up from €200 a tonne to €600 in the space of 12 months. On top of that, the government is planning to shut the German coal industry by the end of the decade.

Ticket prices have been raised, but the outlook remains uncertain. "It's tough for us to assess how we will keep going," Michael Misslitz, managing director of Molli the Bathing Train, told the Ostsee-Zeitung.



Raging Roland is named after a Renaissance poem

Molli's ancestors began carrying passengers between Heiligendamm, Europe's oldest seaside bathing resort, and Bad Doberan on the outskirts of Rostock in 1886. Raging Roland, named after the German title of Ludovico Ariosto's Renaissance epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, followed in the 1890s.

Misslitz said Molli's total fuel bills had risen by €1 million this year. Raging Roland is facing more than half a million euros in extra annual costs. "We want to keep going with the steam operation if possible," Misslitz said. "It's a tradition we want to preserve."

Hunters get licence to end dolce vita for urban boar

Italy

Tom Kington Rome

Hunters will be allowed to track and shoot wild boar on Italian city streets.

A new law, backed by Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy party, will extend boar-hunting into national parks and cities in an attempt to reduce the surging boar population of 2.3 million. Any animals shot by registered hunters or police that are deemed healthy can be eaten, the measure states.

The rule is designed to combat the invasion of boars in cities such as Rome, where they rummage through overflowing bins, trot down busy streets and attack dog-walkers, prompting curfews in some neighbourhoods.

Animal rights groups are furious. One, LAV, has warned of "a new season of massacres". Another organisation, OIPA, said the government was bringing the "Wild West" to Italy.

Coldiretti, a farmers' lobby group, backed the measure, reporting that 13 people had died in the past year in car crashes caused by wild animals.

Boars are also spreading African swine fever, with 211 cases reported this year in northern regions. Although humans cannot be infected, farmers are worried it will spread to pigs and wipe out the prosciutto industry.

Father of the atomic bomb 'never spied for Moscow'

Rhys Blakely

Historians have applauded the White House for saying that Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist known as the father of the atomic bomb, was wrongly stripped of his security clearance almost 70 years ago.

Oppenheimer, who died in 1967, led the Manhattan Project, which developed the first nuclear weapons during the Second World War, including the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.



Oppenheimer was accused of being a Soviet spy

He was born in New York in 1904 and developed his left-wing politics during the Second World War. He never became a member of the Communist Party, as was alleged. He was later accused of having communist sympathies and fell under suspicion of being a Soviet spy. His security clearance was revoked in 1954, during the McCarthy era and the so-called Second Red Scare, the height of left-wing persecutions.

Jennifer Granholm, the US energy secretary, said: "More evidence has come to light of the bias and unfairness of the process that Dr Oppenheimer was subjected to, while the evidence of his loyalty and love of country have been further affirmed."

Historians said the decision had been overdue. Kai Bird, a co-author of *American Prometheus: the Triumph and Tragedy of J Robert Oppenheimer*, which won a Pulitzer Prize, told The New York Times: "What was done to Oppenheimer in 1954 was a black mark on the honour of the nation. Students of American history will be able to read the last chapter and see that what was done in that kangaroo court proceeding was not the last word."

Alex Wellerstein, a science historian at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, said: "The injustice done to Oppenheimer doesn't get undone by this. But it's nice to see a response even if it's decades too late."

XINHUA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Don't forget the sunscreen A swimmer can't get enough of the cold after emerging from the 2C icy sea in Amur Bay, Russia



I'll prove DeSantis stole election, says Trump ally

United States
Alistair Dawber Washington

One of Donald Trump's most enthusiastic supporters and a vocal proponent of the idea that the presidency was stolen in 2020 has questioned the legitimacy of another recent election result, that of Trump's biggest rival, Ron DeSantis.

Mike Lindell, who runs a pillow company, is a frequent contributor to a clutch of pro-Trump cable television news channels. He claims to have spent $25 million on trying to prove the last presidential election was rigged and says he is going to stand to be chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Speaking on Lindell TV, his online television station, the businessman announced that he wanted to "audit" the result of the Florida gubernatorial election in last month's midterms. "I am going to break a little breaking news. This will probably surprise a lot of people," Lindell said, despite being urged by a lawyer off camera not to announce his plans.

DeSantis was the standout Republican winner on election night amid a series of disappointing results for the party. His landslide re-election victory has propelled him to the top of Republican polls for the 2024 presidential nomination.

Despite not being expected to announce that he is a candidate until next summer at the earliest, DeSantis, 44, is comfortably leading Trump in most polls. This week, a YouGov survey had the Florida governor eight points ahead. In another poll this month, the lead was 23 points.

Trump, 76, and his backers know they will have to beat DeSantis to have any chance of winning the nomination and the White House in 2024. It appears that Lindell's tactics are similar to those of the past. "I don't believe it," Lindell said, of DeSantis's easy victory. "So it's just going to show everybody — just like we always tell you about Democrats where they stole their elections … I'm going to find out if Dade County — what happened there." Known as Miami-Dade county since 1997, it largely covers Miami and is usually a strong area for Democrats in Florida. DeSantis won 55.2 per cent of the vote.

"For me, I look at deviations, everybody. That's a deviation," Lindell said. "I don't believe it [the Florida result]."

In a separate interview, he said that "a Republican hasn't won Dade County like DeSantis did". He went on to ask "if there was problems with the election, things with the machine or whatever".

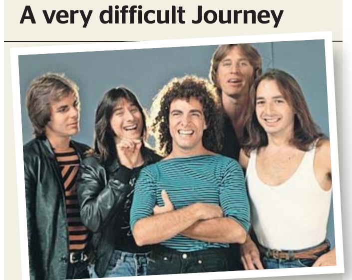
There is no evidence that the election in Florida was anything other than free and fair. Charlie Crist, the losing Democrat, has congratulated DeSantis on his victory. The 2020 presidential election is also regarded as legitimate by all but the most ardent Trump supporters.

Another Trump loyalist attacked DeSantis this week. Roger Stone said that the Florida governor owed his career to Trump. "Ron DeSantis became governor solely because of Donald Trump," Stone told the Real America's Voice channel. In a reference to a chain of ice cream shops, he added that without Trump's support "he would be working at a Dairy Queen right now".

Stone was sentenced to 40 months in prison as part of the Mueller investigation after being charged with witness tampering, obstructing an official proceeding, and five counts of making false statements. He was eventually pardoned by Trump.

Trump is so far the only Republican candidate to declare for 2024. This week the January 6 committee recommended four criminal charges against him after its investigation into last year's riots at the US Capitol. Many leading moderate Republicans are hoping that the investigation, and others, will put paid to Trump's 2024 campaign.

A very difficult Journey



Neal Schon, lead guitarist of the American rock group Journey, has accused its keyboard player of damaging their reputation by performing *Don't Stop Believin'* at Donald Trump's home in Florida (Peter Stubley writes).

Schon, centre, served a cease-and-desist letter on Jonathan Cain, left, after seeing his rendition of the band's song at the former president's Mar-a-Lago residence, with backing vocals by the Republicans Marjorie Taylor Greene, Kimberly Guilfoyle and Kari Lake last month.

"Mr Cain has no right to use Journey for politics," a lawyer for Schon said. "His politics should be his own personal business."

The letter also claimed that the performance "polarises the band's fans" and was a "harmful use of the brand".

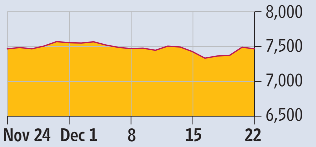
Cain, who co-wrote the hit with Schon and the singer Steve Perry in 1981, was photographed with Trump during a 2018 visit to the White House.

The cease-and-desist letter, first reported by the entertainment website Variety, expresses the hope that it will not "further add to the animosity that is currently plaguing the band". Schon, 68, has previously fallen out with Cain, 72, over mixing religion, politics and music as well as the use of the song at Trump's campaign rallies.

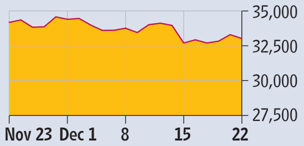
Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
7,469.28 (-28.04)

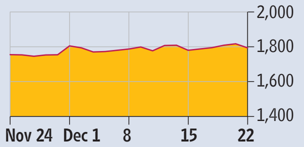


Dow Jones
33,027.49 (-348.99)

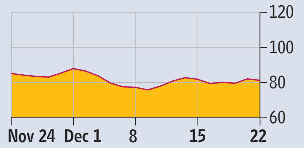


COMMODITIES

Gold
$1,793.87 (-23.65)

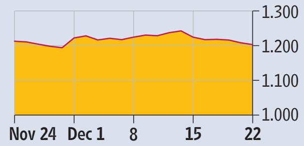


Brent crude (6pm)
$81.27 (-0.82)

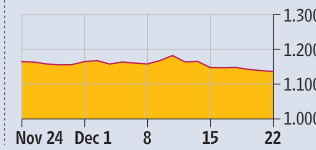


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.2030 (-0.0045)



£/€
€1.1363 (-0.0032)



Britain on brink of deepest recession in G7 as economy shrinks

Arthi Nachiappan

Britain is on course to suffer the deepest recession of any significant developed nation next year as stagnating wages and a slowdown in household spending hold back a recovery.

According to Samuel Tombs, of Pantheon Macroeconomics, the consultancy: "We expect Britain to suffer the deepest recession among major advanced economies in 2023, due to the severity of the headwinds from both monetary and fiscal policy."

The bleak forecast came yesterday as the Office for National Statistics released an analysis suggesting that the UK's economy had contracted more sharply than previously thought in the third quarter of 2022.

It calculates that gross domestic product, the main measure of output, shrank by 0.3 per cent in three months to September, compared with a preliminary estimate of 0.2 per cent. The office also revised down its growth estimates for the first half of the year, calculating that Britain managed growth of only 0.6 per cent in the first quarter and 0.1 per cent in the second. This implies that output is 0.8 per cent below where it stood before the pandemic, making the UK the only G7 economy whose output stalled below its pre-Covid level.

The United States is leading the recovery, with GDP 4.3 per cent above its 2019 level. Eurozone output is up by 2.2 per cent.

Experts predict that the economy will have contracted again in the final quarter of this year, which would mean that Britain has entered a recession, defined as two consecutive quarters of falling output. Figures for the final quarter, which covers October to December, will be published in February.

Manufacturing and construction output declined more steeply than first thought, down by 2.8 per cent and 0.2 per cent, respectively.

Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, said: "High inflation driven by Putin's invasion of Ukraine is slowing economic growth across the world. No country is immune, least of all Britain. We have a plan that will help to more than halve inflation next year, while laying the foundations for long-term growth through record investment in infrastructure and new industries."

FTX founder released on $250m bail

Bankman-Fried appears in dock in New York

Robert Miller, Martin Strydom

Sam Bankman-Fried, the co-founder and former head of FTX, will be released on a $250 million bond while he awaits trial on fraud charges related to the collapse of the crypto exchange, a court in New York ruled yesterday.

The 30-year-old appeared in the dock soon after his extradition from the Bahamas, where he lived and FTX was based, as two former associates pleaded guilty to defrauding investors.

Bankman-Fried, who did not enter a plea, faces charges including conspiracy to commit wire fraud on customers and lenders, money laundering and violations of campaign finance laws. He could spend years in prison if convicted.

Prosecutors accuse him of stealing billions of dollars in FTX customer funds to cover losses at Alameda Research, his hedge fund.

Nicolas Roos, assistant US attorney acting for the prosecution, told Gabriel Gorenstein, a federal magistrate judge, that the bail conditions would require Bankman-Fried to surrender his passport and to remain in home confinement at his parents' house in Palo Alto, California. He also would be required to undergo regular mental health treatment and evaluation.

Roos called the package the "largest ever pre-trial bond".

Gorenstein said Bankman-Fried had "achieved sufficient notoriety that it would be impossible" for him to hide without being recognised or to engage in further financial schemes.

Mark Cohen, Bankman-Fried's lawyer, said he agreed with the conditions. He noted that the accused's parents would co-sign the bond and post the equity in their home as assurance for their son's return to court. "My client made no effort to flee," he said.

Gorenstein set Bankman-Fried's next court date for January 3. "I'm going to require strict pre-trial supervision," he said, with conditions including electronic monitoring and a ban on opening new lines of credit or businesses.

Bankman-Fried's court appearance came shortly after Gary Wang, a co-founder of FTX, and Caroline Ellison, former joint chief executive of Alameda Research, had been charged "in connection with their roles in the frauds that contributed to FTX's collapse".

● Sir Jon Cunliffe, deputy governor for financial stability at the Bank of England, said last night that cryptocurrency was a "gamble" that should be regulated. "You should have the ability to [trade cryptocurrencies] in a place that is regulated in the same way you can gamble in a casino," he told Sky News. The popularity of trading had gone beyond retail investors, he added. " I don't think it will be possible this can be kept outside the financial system. It's too dangerous."

REUTERS



Sam Bankman-Fried, former head of FTX, the collapsed cryptocurrency platform, was handcuffed for his extradition from the Bahamas to New York

In a statement posted on Twitter, Damian Williams, US attorney for the southern district of New York, said Ellison, 28, and Wang, 29, had pleaded guilty to the charges and were "co-operating".

The US Securities and Exchange Commission said in a separate statement that it had charged Ellison and Wang for their roles in a multi-year scheme to defraud FTX investors.

The regulator claims that between 2019 and 2022, Ellison, at the direction of Bankman-Fried, manipulated the price of FTT, an FTX-issued exchange crypto security token, by buying large quantities on the open market to prop up its price.

The token served as collateral for undisclosed loans by FTX of its customers' assets to Alameda, a crypto hedge fund owned by Wang and Bankman-Fried and run by Ellison.

The complaint alleges that, by manipulating the price of FTT, Bankman-Fried and Ellison inflated the valuation of Alameda's FTT holdings, overstating the value of collateral on Alameda's balance sheet and so misleading investors about FTX's risk exposure. Bankman-Fried acknowledged risk management failures but not criminal liability.

'Brazen' crypto fraud, pages 42-43

£1.3m fine for Deloitte's flawed audit

Tom Howard

Deloitte and one of its senior partners have been fined £1.3 million after accepting that the Big Four accountant's work on the 2015 and 2016 audits of SIG, the building materials group, fell short of expected standards.

The Financial Reporting Council began investigating Deloitte in 2018 after it was revealed that SIG, which supplies roof tiles and insulation to developers, had been overstating profits and its cash position. The accounting errors meant that SIG's full-year profits in 2016 were overstated by £3.7 million.

SIG had rebate agreements in place with several of its suppliers, which were based on how many of that supplier's products it had bought during the year.

In its investigation, the FRC found evidence of "intentional overstatement" of rebate balances by some SIG staff. In some instances, they had included rebates for which there was "known to be no contractual entitlement". The regulator said rebate balances also had been inflated by "overoptimistic forecasting [and] factual errors".

Deloitte was not found to have been "reckless or dishonest", but the watchdog criticised the auditors for not exercising "sufficient professional scepticism". After inspecting a sample of 25 rebate agreements, for example, the auditors decided that they were satisfied with each one, despite having not seen signed paperwork for ten of them.

Deloitte was also censured for not paying closer attention to high-value cheques issued to suppliers before the year-end but with future dates written on them.

Deloitte was fined £1.25 million for the failings, cut to £906,250 for its early admission of wrongdoing. It was also ordered to pay costs of £120,481. Simon Manning, who led Deloitte's audits of SIG and remains a partner at the firm, was fined £50,000, cut to £36,250.

A spokeswoman for Deloitte said: "We are disappointed that our work on the 2015 and 2016 SIG audits fell short of the high standards expected of us."

Need to know

1 In a move that could destroy Britain's electric car industry, companies that make net zero products in America will soon be eligible for vast subsidies from the US government. The same subsidies will not be available to "green" products made in the UK amid warnings that the country's critical £4.3 billion car export market to the United States could be decimated. **Page 4**

2 Rail passengers face the biggest fare rises in 11 years, despite a government intervention to cap increases significantly below inflation. Mark Harper, the transport secretary, said that from March the cost of a season ticket and other fares would rise by 5.9 per cent. **Page 6**

3 Britain is on course for the deepest recession of any developed nation next year as stagnating wages and a slowdown in household spending hold back a recovery. The Office for National Statistics suggests the economy contracted more sharply than previously thought in the third quarter of 2022. **Pages 6, 41**

4 About 1,000 members of the Public and Commercial Services Union who check passports have walked out in a dispute over pay and conditions. Border Force officers will strike at Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Cardiff, Birmingham and Glasgow until the end of year, except for December 27. **Page 10**

5 Sam Bankman-Fried, co-founder and former head of FTX, will be released on a $250 million bond to await trial on fraud charges related to the collapse of the crypto exchange, a New York court ruled. **Page 41**

6 Deloitte and one of its senior partners have been fined £1.3 million after accepting that work on audits of SIG fell short of standards. The Financial Reporting Council began investigating in 2018 after finding the building materials group had been overstating profits. **Page 41**

7 A £10 billion lawsuit against BHP over the Samarco disaster in Brazil will begin in English courts in the spring of 2024. The world's biggest mining group is facing a class action claim over the accident in 2015 that killed 19 people.

8 A recovery in sales and a new borrowing deal have eased investors' concerns about the finances of Superdry. Shares in the troubled fashion retailer jumped by 16.6 per cent after it announced a rise in first-half revenues.

9 Big technology companies are starting to shed space in Europe. Meta, owner of Facebook, Alphabet, Google's parent, and Salesforce, the software group, are among those looking to abandon office space in London and Dublin. **Page 44**

10 Rail strikes could cost the hospitality sector more than £1.5 billion in lost sales amid an epidemic of cancelled bookings and customer no-shows. Some regions reported shortfalls in takings of 40 per cent last week, normally the busiest week of the year. **Page 45**

How 'brazen' multibillion crypto fraud fell to pieces

As the FTX founder faces a New York court, **Alex Ralph** reports on the rise and fall of a digital currency empire



The resort in the Bahamas where Sam Bankman-Fried bought a property for his

As Sam Bankman-Fried prepared to appear in a Manhattan court yesterday, the "massive" fraud allegedly orchestrated by the FTX co-founder was detailed in a charge sheet brought against two of his closest associates.

In a forensic 38-page case brought by the US Securities and Exchange Commission against Gary Wang, a co-founder of FTX, and Caroline Ellison, former chief executive of Alameda Research, a crypto hedge fund, the regulators lay bare how a three-and-a-half-year "brazen" fraud began to crumble like a "house of cards".

The financial regulator claims Bankman-Fried, 30, diverted billions of dollars of the trading platform's customer funds "for his own personal benefit and to help grow his crypto empire".



From at least May 2019, when FTX was created, to last month, Bankman-Fried, along with Ellison and Wang — who this week both pleaded guilty to fraud and are co-operating with the southern district of New York — are said to have defrauded FTX investors and customers.

Bankman-Fried portrayed himself as a responsible leader of the crypto community, touting the importance of regulation and accountability and casting FTX as an "innovative and conservative trailblazer" in crypto markets. Customers around the world, believing his story and that their assets were secure, sent billions of dollars to FTX, the watchdog says.

In reality, it is claimed, Bankman-Fried and Wang, 29, allegedly improperly diverted customer assets to Alameda — the crypto asset hedge fund they had founded and co-owned, and that Ellison ran — and its subsidiaries. The misappropriated FTX customer funds are said to have been used by Ellison, 28, for Alameda's trading activity and by Bankman-Fried as his "personal piggy bank".

He allegedly blended funds from Alameda to make large political donations and "to purchase tens of millions of dollars in Bahamian real estate for himself, his parents and other FTX executives".

The scheme allegedly was hidden from FTX's investors, who ultimately put in at least $1.8 billion. Investors were told Alameda was "just another platform customer with no special privileges".

However, Alameda had been exempted from the firm's "risk-mitigation measures" and was provided with "significant special treatment" on the FTX platform, "including a virtually unlimited 'line of credit' funded by the platform's customers", the SEC says. Alameda was the centre of a "connected web" of more than 100 entities, with Bankman-Fried at the top. In addition to the credit, Alameda borrowed billions of dollars from third-party lenders, backed in "significant part" by Alameda's holdings of FTT, an illiquid crypto asset security that was issued by FTX and was provided to Alameda "at no cost".

Ellison, directed by Bankman-Fried, allegedly made automated purchases of FTT tokens across various platforms to increase their price and inflate the value of Alameda's collateral.

This, it is claimed, allowed Alameda to borrow "even more money from

£10bn dam claim against BHP to have day in court

Emily Gosden

A £10 billion lawsuit against BHP over the deadly Samarco disaster in Brazil will begin in English courts in the spring of 2024, a judge has ruled.

The world's biggest mining group is facing the largest ever English class action claim over the accident in 2015 that killed 19 people and caused the country's worst environmental disaster.

The calamity was the result of the collapse of the Fundão "tailings" dam at BHP and Vale's Samarco joint venture near Mariana in Minas Gerais province. The accident unleashed 40 million cubic metres of tailings, or toxic mining waste, which destroyed villages and polluted 400 miles of waterways along the River Doce to the sea.

More than 400,000 people affected by the accident are suing BHP in London for damages of more than £10 billion — double the number of claimants and costs that had been cited previously.

The case was allowed to proceed after the Court of Appeal this summer overturned a 2020 High Court ruling that had thrown it out.

A judge has now ruled that the first, eight-week phase of the trial can begin in April 2024.

Mrs Justice Finola O'Farrell noted that it was "already more than four years since the proceedings were commenced and more than seven years since the collapse". She said: "There is a compelling argument that the court should set a date and estimate for the first trial of liability so as to avoid further delay."

Lawyers from Pogust Goodhead representing the claimants said that present and former leading executives of BHP would face cross-examination in court.

BHP denies the claims in their entirety and has consistently argued that the UK action is unnecessary, as it duplicates matters covered by existing remedial schemes and legal proceedings in Brazil.

BHP was a FTSE 100 group until it dropped out of London's leading index in January after unifying its dual corporate structure under a main listing in Australia. It retains a standard listing in London. The group reported record underlying profits of $23.8 billion in the year to June 30. Its shares fell 47½p, or 1.8 per cent, to £25.37½ last night.

Trading pressures provide a challenging test of Character

Tom Saunders

Peppa Pig is feeling the pinch. The Character Group, the listed toymaker whose Santa-friendly ranges also include stretchy Star Wars figures and Jurassic Park dinosaur eggs, has reported a slowdown in sales in the run-up to Christmas.

Tough trading conditions and sterling's collapse against the dollar in September and October are weighing on the company's performance in what traditionally is retail's golden quarter.

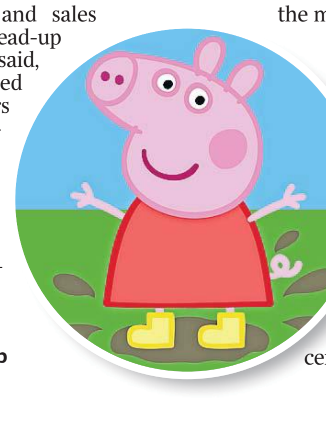
"Trading conditions have become more challenging and sales have slowed in the lead-up to Christmas," it said, adding that combined with other factors this would "adversely affect the group's performance in the first half of the current financial year".

The warning came as The Character Group said its statutory profit before tax had fallen by a quarter in the year to August 31, from £15.3 million to £11.4 million, despite a 25 per cent increase in revenue to £176 million. It blamed increases in the cost of materials, production and freight, plus margins squeezed by customers' resistance to price increases.

Nevertheless, Character remains optimistic: reduced production costs in the company's Chinese factories, easing of supply chain snags and the recovery of the pound are expected to contribute to a stronger performance in the months to come.

Character, an Aim-listed company, employs 216 permanent staff in its factories and warehouses in Britain, Scandinavia and Asia. It highlighted its Peppa Pig range as one of its standout performers over the past year.

Shares in The Character Group rose by 12p, or nearly 3 per cent, to 435p yesterday.



Peppa Pig has been a big performer for The Character Group

ALBANY BAHAMAS RESORT





mother, Barbara Fried, right, and father. Left: Caroline Ellison

external lenders at increased risk to the lenders and to FTX's investors and customers, all in furtherance of the scheme".

The alleged fraud began to unravel in May when crypto markets plummeted. Alameda's lenders demanded repayment on billions of dollars of loans, which it was unable to provide.

Instead, Bankman-Fried allegedly directed FTX to divert billions more in customer assets to Alameda to prop up the hedge fund's lending relationships and so money could "continue to flow" from investors.

Based on a software code previously created by Wang, FTX's chief technology officer, Alameda was able to borrow "virtually limitless funds from FTX". Ellison then used FTX's customer assets to pay Alameda's debts, the SEC claims.

Amid the slumping crypto prices, FTX publicly continued to cultivate its "trustworthy" company brand. In the summer it issued materials to one investor, promoting how it had been endorsed "by some of the most trustworthy public figures, including Tom Brady, Major League Baseball and Gisele Bündchen, the Brazilian fashion model … FTX has the cleanest brand in crypto."

Bankman-Fried was also casting himself as a "hero", outwardly playing an important role in stabilising the industry and saving other failing firms.

Even as the scheme was spiralling out of control, investors and the public continued to be misled about FTX's "true financial condition", the SEC says. On November 2, CoinDesk, a crypto news website, published an article on an Alameda balance sheet that it had obtained, which revealed a large position in FTT and other FTX-associated tokens.

Directed by Bankman-Fried, Ellison took to Twitter in an attempt to reassure investors. However, "in contrast to the positive message … Ellison knew, or was reckless in not knowing, that Alameda was insolvent", the regulator claims.

The following week, FTX paused all customer withdrawals, prompting FTT to plunge by 80 per cent. This meant that Alameda's collateral on deposit was worth far less than the amount Alameda had borrowed from FTX, leaving the exchange with billions of dollars in effectively unrecoverable loans.

Bankman-Fried unsuccessfully sought emergency investment, including from Binance, to help to cover an $8 billion shortfall.

A day after Ellison admitted to Alameda staff that she, Bankman-Fried and Wang knew that FTX customer funds had been used by Alameda, Bankman-Fried, finally "confronting the implosion" of FTX, tweeted on November 10: "I'm sorry. That's the biggest thing. I f***ed up, and should have done better."

The next day he resigned from FTX. Soon after, FTX and about 100 related entities filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Confident Superdry back in fashion

Russell Hotten

A recovery in sales and a new borrowing deal have eased investors' concerns about the finances of Superdry.

Shares in the troubled fashion retailer jumped by 16¾p, or 16.6 per cent, to 118p after it announced a 3.6 per cent rise in first-half revenues and said its present trading period had started well online and in-store.

The company has struck a new loan facility of up to £80 million for three years with Bantry Bay Capital, a relatively little-known lender. It will be at a higher interest rate than an existing facility with HSBC and BNP Paribas that expires at the end of January.

Superdry said that "given market conditions", the interest rate would be at 7.5 per cent above the sterling overnight interbank average rate. Nevertheless, analysts at Jefferies said "it has to be taken as a positive that funding concerns have been removed".

In October Superdry issued a "going concern warning" as it tried to secure new financing.

Julian Dunkerton, 57, Superdry's founder and chief executive, said he was "very pleased" to have completed the refinancing, which left the business in good shape to build on its recent solid trading. Shop sales in the 26 weeks to October 29 rose by 14.4 per cent year-on-year. The "momentum" had continued, he said, and Superdry had sold a record number of jackets online during the recent Black Friday week.

Dunkerton co-founded the retailer in 2003 and owns 23.9 per cent of the business. Having left the company, he returned in 2019 after a battle with its former management. There have been persistent rumours of potential buyers circling Superdry and that Dunkerton himself was talking to private equity firms about a buyout.

Dunstone partners share £23.6m payday

Alex Ralph

Partners at an investment vehicle founded by Sir Charles Dunstone have shared a bumper £23.6 million, according to recently filed accounts.

They suggest that nine partners at Freston Ventures, whose investments include Five Guys, the fast-food chain, and Strike, an estate agent, have been paid about £2.6 million on average.

The payout from Freston comes after it generated operating profit of £21 million in the year to the end of March. It compares with pay of almost £8 million a year earlier.

Freston, based in Notting Hill, London, was co-founded in 2010 by Dunstone, 58, the founder of TalkTalk and Carphone Warehouse, with Roger Taylor, 58, a long-term associate. A Freston joint venture partnership is behind the Five Guys burger chain; it backs private equity, which funds the likes of Leon, Charlotte Tillbury and Evans Cycles; and works in partnership with investment funds, according to its website. Freston also makes direct investments, such as in Strike and Me+Em, the fashion brand.

Other partners of Freston include Andy Harrison, the former boss of Carphone Warehouse, whose wife is Tristia Harrison, chief executive of TalkTalk.

Freston was approached for comment.

In the year they lost it, the winner is…



BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Oscars, Baftas, Spoty. Business leaders can feel left out when others finish the year groaning in garlands. And who really cares about that? Still, the corporate gamechangers giving 110 per cent every day to move the needle and boil the ocean deserve some sort of Christmas bauble. So, after some circling back through the past 12 months, here they are.

The Packing It In Prize
A strong field troubled the judges, what with a fifth of FTSE 100 bosses downing tools, either of their own volition (Whitbread's Alison Brittain, Halma's Andrew Williams, Rolls-Royce's Warren East, say) or someone else's (JD Sports' Peter Cowgill, Vodafone's Nick Read).

Yet, for packing it in before packing it in, step forward the man who gave investors a "near-death experience" (in the words of Terry Smith). Yes, Unilever's Alan Jope, who proved what a diet of Brut, Bovril and Ben & Jerry's can do to a fellow by bidding £50 billion for Glaxo's consumer health wing, ditching it days later and winding up with not any old activist on the board but Nelson Peltz, father-in-law to Brooklyn Beckham. Even better, Jope's not yet a Uni-leaver, still selling his Magnum ice creams to Vladimir Putin while droning on about "sustainable living". No wonder he's so big on "agility".
Runner-up Elon Musk

The Nature Lover's Palm
A jungle of contenders, including BlackRock's Larry Fink, accused of ESG "hypocrisy" by activist Bluebell, not least on the coal front; HSBC's Noel Quinn, whose crashing waves ads were deemed so much greenwash by the Advertising Standards Authority; and Shell's Ben van Beurden, who had a run-in with some uppity Dutch green group.

Yet none could match his BP rival Bernard Looney, who stood down from the Russian Geographical Society's board of trustees. No more fawning addresses from him to the chairman (a certain Vladimir Putin), relaying Looney's unbridled joy at his work with the Volga State University of Water Transport, investigating the "consequences of man-made activities for the diverse plankton of the Volga River". All a bit Volga now.
Runner-up Elon Musk (for services to Mars)

The Wheels Coming Off Medal
A grid-full of wannabes, with some familiar figures — not least Lawrence Stroll. He's still driving his Aston Martin jalopy, now on its 4,758th equity refuelling, this time with some Saudi backseat drivers. Their stake cost them an arm and a leg. Cazoo's Alex Chesterman, expertly driving the shares 99 per cent downhill, also made a bold show, as did whoever runs Tesla.

No one, though, could compete with Kwasi Kwarcrash: a fellow capable of going from 0-100 in less than three seconds and leaving the British economy in a ditch. A shoo-in for Stroll's Formula One team once he's had enough of his son.
Runner-up Elon Musk

The Extortionist's Accolade
Some judges reckoned this should go to the Bank of England's narcoleptic guv'nor Andrew Bailey for the extortionate effect he's had on prices — after unfortunately falling asleep when inflation arrived. And, if not him, Michael Gove, for his threats to housebuilders to fill his cladding kitty. One reasoned Gove had "split up with his wife, lost his house, realised he has no money and turned into a Marxist".

Still, neither could compete with the man who gave Emirates airline "36 hours" notice to turf travellers off its planes to meet his new capacity cap with threats of "legal action for non-compliance" but still campaigned to double passenger charges: the Heathrow hot air balloon, John Holland-Kaye.
Runner-up Elon Musk (for services to Twitter's banks)

The Industrial Strife Shield
Top efforts from the RMT's Mick "look behind you, that's a picket line" Lynch and his posties strike lookalike, the CWU's Dave Ward. But neither could compete with Peter Hebblethwaite, the P&O Ferries boss, who chucked 800 seafarers overboard, no doubt reasoning if he'd consulted with the RMT first it would have scuttled the ships. Hebble went on to tell MPs that he "wilfully broke the law". Talk he's advising Rishi Sunak on the nurses strike may be unreliable.
Runner-up Elon Musk (for sacking half the Twitter crew)

The Tech Trophy
A slugfest, starring Theranos's "fake it 'til you make it" Elizabeth Holmes, now agonising over whether black turtlenecks qualify as prison attire; Sensyne Health's more stupid AI algorithms, which took an age to get shot of Lord Drayson; and the mum of THG's Matt Moulding, who wrote to journos telling them they "must lead very dreary lives" in their "dead-end jobs" just before the shares collapsed — again.

But the winner? The partners of Sequoia Capital, who posted a 14,000-word hagiography of Fried Bankman Sam on its website discussing his "Savior Complex": a piece that bizarrely vanished once his FTX crypto con job went phut.
Runner-up Elon Musk

The Noel Skum Festive Award for Wacko Behaviour
A walkover for the sponsor's anagrammatic avatar Elon Musk. Buying Twitter, then not buying it; celebrating it as the "de facto public town square", then trashing it; going to a Delaware court to trash it some more, then buying it anyway; saying it could out-spam Monty Python, then calling it the "accelerant to creating X"; installing paid-for blue ticks; then uninstalling the paid-for bit; being Chief Twit, then removing himself as Chief Twit after polling Twitland; spending $44 billion on a "plane that is headed towards the ground at high speed". Is this what bosses call the "new normal"?
Runner-up Noel Skum (Elon Musk half an hour later).

Er, that's enough awards.

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Big Tech cuts London office space as staff prefer to work from home

Tom Howard

Big technology companies, whose office requirements seemed immune to the pandemic, are now starting to shed space at their headquarters in London and around Europe.

Many businesses have sought to scale back their office footprints over the past couple of years, but technology companies were among the few still in the market for more space.

Just over a year ago Meta, the owner of Facebook, agreed to move into a refurbished 310,000 sq ft office at 1 Triton Square, near Regent's Park, on a 20-year lease. At the time the deal was seen as a sign of confidence in the post-pandemic appeal of big London offices, but Meta has yet to move into the block and it confirmed this month that it would try to sublet the space instead.

The company, which is cutting 11,000 jobs globally, is also trying to find replacement tenants for part of its European headquarters in Dublin, on which it signed a 25-year lease in 2018.

Alphabet, Google's parent, and Salesforce, the American software group, are among the Big Tech players also now looking to abandon some of their office space in London and Dublin.

The ability — and preference — of many developers, programmers and other technology staff to work from home has put the brakes on the office property sector's expansion. Boards are also having to respond to sharp declines in the stock market values of such companies, which are shrinking both headcounts and property costs.

"A lot of Big Tech firms have been land-banking buildings in recent years based on future headcount predictions," Chris Valentine, head of central London office agency at JLL, the commercial property company, said. "They've been going through a difficult time this year so they've been either freezing hiring or reducing staff. This feels like a natural response to that."

Google is expected to move out of at least one of its London offices — its former UK headquarters at Belgrave House in Victoria, central London — next year, the Financial Times has reported, adding that more sublets might be considered, too. Last year the group bought an office in the West End for $1 billion that it had been leasing for years while it waited for its new headquarters to open in King's Cross, which is expected to accommodate most of its staff.

Salesforce, whose technology allows businesses to keep track of customer relationships, is understood to be looking to sublet a floor at its tower in central London. Google and Salesforce did not respond to requests for comment.

Other companies have put any office expansion plans on hold while they wait to see how hybrid working develops and for the gloom hanging over the global economy to lift. More are expected to follow, according to Andrew Mawson, founder of the Advanced Workplace Associates consultancy. "The tech sector average office attendance is just 20 per cent, with a maximum of 23 per cent on a Wednesday," he said.

The change of tack in one of the most active industries in the office market will deal another blow to landlords, which have already started to note the value of their towers tumbling as interest rates have moved higher.

Aaron Guy, a property analyst at Citi, claimed this month that London offices would lose more than a third of their value over the next couple of years, "driven primarily by recessionary impacts on higher unemployment and continued WFH office shrinkage".

Not all the Big Tech companies, however, are cutting their office footprints. Apple has leased another three floors at 22 Bishopsgate, the City of London's newest skyscraper, this year, and will shortly move into its new UK campus at Battersea Power Station.





Meta, the owner of Facebook, is planning to sublet space at 1 Triton Square, above, but Apple has leased more floors at 22 Bishopsgate

Coastal ports hit by Brexit bureaucracy and strikes

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

A combination of Brexit bureaucracy, dockers' strikes and the contracting economy have led to a decline in the amount of business going through coastal ports, with trade still down by 5.2 per cent on pre-pandemic levels.

About 95 per cent of physical goods traded by the UK go through its maritime ports. Latest figures from the British Ports Association show that in the 12 months to the end of September volumes going through the top 50 ports were down by 24 million tonnes from the pre-pandemic period in 2018-19. More than two thirds of the ports reported declines on pre-Covid levels.

The numbers would have been worse but for an 18 per cent increase in volumes at Milford Haven. The terminal in west Wales is benefiting from the energy crisis as it is Britain's largest hub for shipments of liquefied natural gas.

The biggest loser was the Port of Dover — Britain's gateway to the Continent in Kent and the country's largest roll-on/roll-off terminal for lorry freight — where volumes were down by 21 per cent. The association's report stated: "The recovery of ro-ro freight volume after the pandemic has been slower and reflects in part the impact of Brexit on some supply chains."

Post-Brexit bureaucracy and new biometric controls at Dover were criticised recently by the port's chief executive. "If we are forced to commit to an inadequate process, it will have a rapid and significant detriment on trade," Doug Bannister said.

Strikes over pay at Felixstowe accounted for a 16 per cent fall in throughput at Britain's largest container port and the recipient of many seaborne goods from the trading routes of Asia. London Gateway on the Thames and Hull and Immingham on the Humber were beneficiaries of Felixstowe's industrial issues.

The Northern Ireland protocol also has caused a distortion in the market. The protocol allows the free movement of goods over the land border between Ulster and the Republic of Ireland, with inspections and document checks instead conducted between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The protocol has meant a sharp increase of goods going through Belfast and Larne, 20 miles to the north, and from Cairnryan near Stranraer in Scotland and Heysham in Lancashire.

Risks to wildlife block Glencore mine

Emily Gosden

Canada has refused Glencore permission to develop a new coalmine, citing its impact on the environment, including harm to caribou and grizzly bears.

The FTSE 100 mining group had been seeking to develop the $450 million Sukunka open-pit mine in British Columbia to produce coking coal for export for use in steelmaking overseas.

The government of Canada said the proposed mine had "significant adverse environmental effects" that could not be mitigated and that "the project therefore cannot proceed".

An assessment by authorities in British Columbia found that the project would affect the threatened southern mountain caribou and its habitat and would result in "increased mortality" of grizzly bears, a species listed as being of special concern.

It also found that the mine would result in "the discharge of mercury and selenium into local water bodies".

Glencore is free to submit revised proposals for the project, which it said would "create significant economic benefits, especially for the people and First Nations of northeastern British Columbia" in its lifetime of up to 20 years. A spokesman said it would now "review the decision, while also having regard to our climate change commitments, before determining next steps".

Glencore is one of the world's biggest commodities groups, with operations in mining and trading. It reported profits of $12.1 billion the first half of this year driven by surging prices for thermal coal, which is used in power stations. It is the world's biggest exporter of thermal coal and has a much smaller business mining coking coal, which is used in steelmaking.

The group has committed to cut its carbon footprint to net zero by 2050, including the emissions generated by customers using its products.

It has said that it will retain but run down its polluting coal business and this month vowed to close 12 coalmines by 2035. It also scrapped plans for a controversial new coalmine in Australia, citing global uncertainty and its net zero commitment.

Shares in Glencore closed down by ½p, or 0.1 per cent, at 560¼p.

Shell's offshore gas plant closed down by new fire

Emily Gosden

Production at Shell's Prelude floating liquefied natural gas plant has been suspended yet again, this time after a fire.

The oil major said that a small fire had been detected on Wednesday in a turbine enclosure on board the facility, 120 miles off the coast of Australia. Although it was extinguished with no injuries, "production has been temporarily suspended and an investigation into the cause of the incident is under way", Shell said.

Shell is the world's biggest independent LNG trader. Prelude theoretically is capable of producing almost 1 per cent of global LNG supplies, but it has been plagued by a variety of problems that have repeatedly forced it offline.

The facility cost an estimated $17 billion to build, well over its original $11 billion budget, and started up later than planned in 2019. It was shut down for much of 2020 owing to technical problems and closed again after a fire in December 2021 that regulators said had left it at risk of catastrophic failure. It restarted, only to be hit by strike action in the summer.

Shell indicated that the latest fire was much smaller and less significant than a year ago and had been "contained using a hand-held extinguisher".

Harry Wallop



The giving of gifts is not a suitable subject for economics, Mr Scrooge

On Sunday my wife and I went with a couple of our kids to a market for Christmas shopping. Arthur, aged 11, skipped off happily with his pocket money.

Half an hour later he returned as giddy as a goat, declaring that he had bought the perfect gift. "It's really good," he said excitedly.

"Who is it for?" I asked.

"It's for Mummy," he whispered to me. "It's jewellery," which made me a touch nervous. I took him aside and asked if I was allowed to see it. He then pulled out of his pocket a ring of hideous ugliness, a sort of *Game of Thrones* confection.

"It was £17.50," he said proudly. "Which I thought was pretty good value."

Reader, it was not good value. It was worth, tops, £3. And I can state with some certainty that my wife would pay at least £17.50 not to have to wear the ring.

What my youngest child had neatly, if inadvertently, demonstrated is something that Joel Waldfogel, the economist, famously called the "deadweight loss of Christmas". It was an idea he first proposed in 1993 while he was at Yale University. He gave a survey to 86 of his students and asked them to list all the gifts they had been given over the holidays. He then asked them to estimate how much their relatives or friends had paid for these gifts. This was in the days before Pricerunner would allow you to easily check the price of that air fryer from Argos.

Next, he asked them to say, putting aside sentiment, how much they would pay to buy those gifts for themselves.

The students estimated that their gifts had cost $438 in total — but they would have been willing to pay only $313, on average, for the same presents. In short, gifts are worth 71.5 per cent of their market value. He later finessed that figure to about 80 per cent or so.

Waldfogel's view of Santa is pretty unequivocal. "Despite the warm feeling he evokes in children, his tornado of giving does a perennially poor job of matching stuff with people," he said. "In so doing, he destroys a lot of value."

The best person to buy things for you is you, not Aunt Margery.



The paper caused a stir and Waldfogel revelled in his role as America's most Grinch-like economist, so much so that he later expanded his thesis into an entire book called *Scroogenomics*. It has become a cult tome among a particular breed of economists who hate the season of giving for being a grossly inefficient way for us to buy books, perfume, toys, lingerie and all the other stuff that ends up under so many Christmas trees.

One such is Tim Harford, who presents the excellent *Cautionary Tales* podcast. He is usually a model of sunny equanimity but when it comes to Christmas, I fear that he shares the view of George Bernard Shaw, who in the 1890s wrote: "Christmas is forced on a reluctant and disgusted nation by the shopkeepers and the press: on its own merits it would wither and shrivel in the fiery breath of universal hatred; and anyone who looked back to it would be turned into a pillar of greasy sausages."

Harford discusses Waldfogel's research in the most recent *Cautionary Tales* and makes the serious argument that consumers' desperation to make Christmas magical not only leads to inefficiency but also fuels a dangerous waste of resources. Individuals get into debt, the planet is damaged. Much of the high street survives only because of our profligate Black Friday and December spending. Famously, good old Woolworths was profitable only for the final six weeks of the year.

In *Scroogenomics*, Waldfogel estimated that Americans spent about an extra $66 billion in the run-up to Christmas. The figure today would be about $100 billion, of which about $20 billion is "deadweight loss". Shouldn't we be using this vast sum of money to buy things we really want, that have utility?

He has a point. I loathe waste and my wife and I have insisted, as the older kids grow into teenagers, that they are specific on their Christmas lists. Yes, you want some football training socks, but what size, colour, brand and serial number please? Aunts and grandparents are then given specific items from this very prescriptive list to purchase. This may sound perilously close to slipping them cash in a brown envelope, but it has been proved that recipients place a far greater value on gifts that they have asked for than on surprises.

Harford, Waldfogel and all the other Scrooges miss a couple of aspects about the inefficiency of Christmas gift-giving, though: those naff socks, that pointless piece of pottery, the gimmicky garlic crusher are rarely completely deadweight. For starters, how many of them end in charity shops, as presents for the kids' school raffle or re-gifted? EBay famously reports a surge in people listing products for sale between December 27 and 30.

The fact that in December we spend twice the amount on books that we do in a typical month, 61 per cent more on phones and 49 per cent more on clothes is not proof that this is all unnecessary spending. It is that we wait until Christmas to get a new scarf, iPhone or the latest Robert Harris novel?

Although Arthur's present to his mother is, it is true, very economically inefficient, it is emotionally efficient. To my wife it will have no utility as a piece of jewellery, but it will be treasured all the same because her youngest son chose it and believed it to be something she would love. If a significant chunk of our consumer economy is based on these inefficient purchasing decisions, is that such a terrible thing? I am not sure it is.

Harry Wallop is a consumer journalist and broadcaster. Follow him on Twitter @hwallop

Train strikes 'could cost hospitality over £1.5bn'

Dominic Walsh

Rail strikes could cost the hospitality sector more than £1.5 billion in lost sales amid an epidemic of cancelled bookings and customer no-shows.

Some regions have reported shortfalls in takings of at least 40 per cent last week, normally the busiest week of the year for office parties as well as a peak period for Christmas shopping.

Takings at pubs and restaurants in central London tumbled to almost half pre-Covid levels during last week's run of strikes and businesses are bracing for further disruption early in the new year.

Kate Nicholls, 52, chief executive of UKHospitality, the trade body, said the rail strikes throughout December could cost hospitality businesses as much as £1.5 billion in lost sales. "The most severe impact we're seeing now is on consumer confidence and the growing cancellations businesses are seeing as a result of the strike," she said.

David Moore, 58, proprietor of Pied à Terre, London's longest standing Michelin-starred restaurant, said: "Last week was a disaster. It would normally have been our busiest week, but only Thursday [a non-strike day] was busy."

He said last week was down more than a third on what he had expected, with lost sales totalling £30,000. "We're probably short £100,000 across all the train strikes we've had so far, but of course there's more to come," he added.

Big corporate bookings failed to materialise as office workers had not bothered trying to make it in to work, while the World Cup kept potential customers away from restaurants, too.

One of the few positives, Moore said, was the return of tourists, with American and French visitors particularly noticeable. He had also resolved staff shortages of a few weeks ago, mainly by advertising for workers in Ireland.

Shops are suffering just as much: the British Retail Consortium said that they are losing billions of pounds on the back of a 21.5 per cent fall in the number of shoppers throughout the country last week.

One rail union is planning further strike action from December 24 to 27, impinging on last-minute Christmas Eve shopping and family visits. Strikes are also set for December 28 to 29 and most of the period from January 3 to 7.

Sarah Willingham, 48, chief executive of Nightcap, the quoted owner of 36 bars, said: "After three stolen Christmases and the economy on its knees, the government should not allow this to happen."

Two-for-one cinema tickets at Everyman

This month, you could watch the biopic, *Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody.* It charts Whitney Houston's rise to international fame and how she became one of the best-selling and most awarded recording artists of all time.



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T&Cs apply. Wednesdays only. *I Wanna Dance with Somebody* ©2022 CTMG. All Rights Reserved. Only in cinemas from Boxing Day.



ERIC CHRISTIAN SMITH/AP

Run for the money YouTube's owner Alphabet is set to pay $2 billion a year to the NFL to live-stream American football as part of its Sunday Ticket package

Record production fires up interest in i3 Energy

Jessica Newman ***Market report***

An Aim-listed oil and gas explorer gave investors plenty of reasons to pile in yesterday: i3 Energy, which has assets in Canada as well as licences in British waters, wowed the City after saying its "exceptional performance" this year had enabled it to significantly raise its dividend for 2023. It is increasing its 2023 minimum payout by 59.4 per cent to nearly £25.5 million, implying a yield of 9.7 per cent.

The Aberdeenshire-based business said production had risen to a record 24,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day this month. It was now forecasting production of between 22,250 and 23,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day for next year, a year-on-year increase of between 10 per cent and 13 per cent.

The higher dividend comes after the group trebled revenues in the first six months of the year to £101.6 million and made a pre-tax profit of £20.3 million for the period, compared with a £7.8 million loss a year earlier. The shares, worth nearly 12½p this time last year, rose 3p, or 14.4 per cent, to 24¼p.

The wider markets reversed early gains, with investors tracking Wall Street lower as encouraging economic data reignited fears that the US Federal Reserve would press on with raising interest rates. In light trading, the FTSE 100 closed 28.04 points, or 0.4 per cent, lower at 7,469.28. A tier below, the FTSE 250 slipped 101.58, or 0.5 per cent, to 18,762.07.

Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust, which owns shares in most of the big American technology stocks, retreated 16¼p, or 2.2 per cent, to 717p. **United Utilities** and **Halma** were among the biggest Footsie fallers, sliding 27¾p, or 2.7 per cent, to 990¼p and 53½p, or 2.6 per cent, to £19.94½, respectively, as the shares traded without entitlement to their dividend.

Ocado's strong performance on Wednesday was not continued as it fell 22½p, or 3.4 per cent, to 629¼p. It wasn't the only retail stock investors discarded: **Asos** lost 16½p, or 3.2 per cent, to 497p and **Frasers Group** fell 9½p, or 1.3 per cent, to 733½p.

The Restaurant Group, which is behind brands including Wagamama and Frankie & Benny's, rose after saying it had agreed new debt terms with its lenders. The revised £340 million package comprises a £220 million term loan and a £120 million revolving credit facility with its existing lenders. The loans were extended by two years to April 2028 and March 2027, respectively. The Restaurant Group's shares rose by nearly ½p, or 1.3 per cent, to 30p.

Other restaurant and pubs groups looked less appetising as fresh data revealed that sales at pubs in the City of London had dwindled because of strikes. **Mitchells & Butlers** lost 3½p, or 2.5 per cent, to 135p and **City Pub Group** fell by a penny, or 1.4 per cent, to 72½p.

TruFin, which holds a portfolio of four companies specialising in niche markets from lending to console gaming, jumped after it told investors it had rejected an offer from an unnamed party for one of the businesses, Oxygen Finance. TruFin said the offer, valuing Oxygen at £26 million, "undervalues the business and prospects of Oxygen". The shares rose 4½p, or 7.1 per cent, to 67½p.

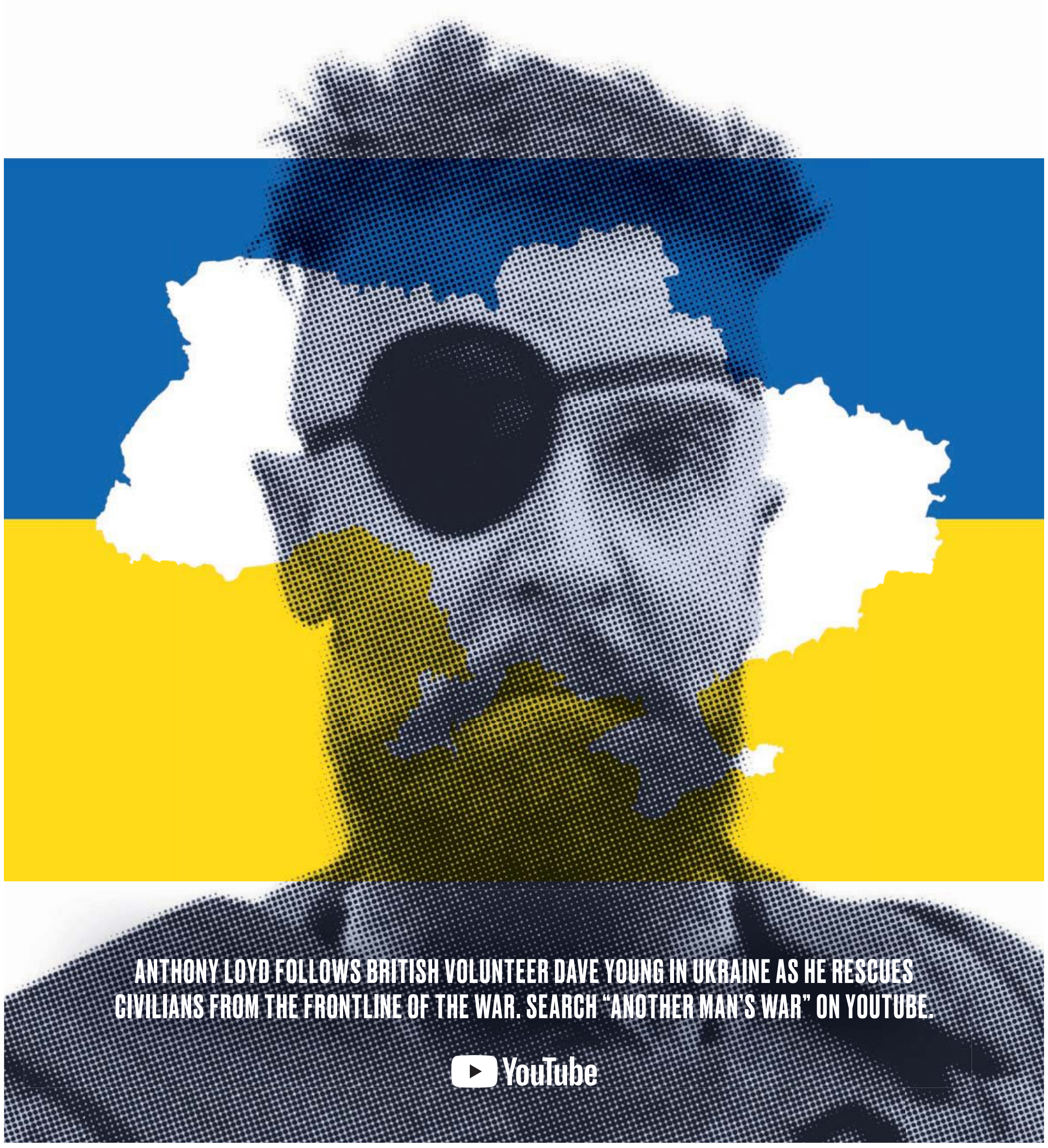
Wall Street report

The dollar rose after the latest solid economic data, but indices fell amid renewed concerns that the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates higher and for longer. The Dow Jones industrial average lost 348.99 points, or 1.1 per cent, to 33,027.49.

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES
Know your times

Another Man's War

One Brit's mission to rescue Ukrainians in frontline towns



The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Superdry Positive trading update	**16.6%**
i3 Energy Raises dividend	**14.4%**
Volution Follow-through buying	**7.4%**
Drax Extends gains	**1.6%**
The Restaurant Group Extends debt facilities	**1.3%**
Abrdn Finance chief steps down	**-2.7%**
Britvic Trades ex-dividend	**-3.1%**
Aston Martin Lagonda Extends losses	**-3.9%**
Darktrace Hits record low	**-4.4%**
Carnival Tracks Wall Street lower	**-6.5%**

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	33027.49 (-348.99)
Nasdaq Composite	10476.12 (-233.25)
S&P 500	3822.39 (-56.05)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	26507.87 (+120.15)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	19679.22 (+518.73)
Amsterdam	
AEX Index	700.40 (-9.18)
Sydney	
AO	7335.20 (+42.20)
Frankfurt	
DAX	13914.07 (-183.75)
Singapore	
Straits	3269.53 (+13.34)
Brussels	
BEL20	3723.15 (-18.05)
Paris	
CAC-40	6517.97 (-62.27)
Zurich	
SMI Index	10774.64 (-70.95)
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	3823.29 (-48.86)
London	
FTSE 100	7469.28 (-28.04)
FTSE 250	18762.07 (-101.58)
FTSE 350	4119.19 (-16.45)
FTSE Eurotop 100	3334.84 (-32.15)
FTSE All-Shares	4079.25 (-16.17)
FTSE Non Financials	5009.76 n/a
techMARK 100	6271.51 (-19.13)
Bargains	n/a
US$	1.2011 (-0.0064)
Euro	1.1353 (-0.0029)
£:SDR	0.98 (+0.00)
Exchange Index	78.40 (-0.08)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
CPI	126.69 Nov (2015 = 100)
RPI	358.30 Nov (Jan 1987 = 100)
RPIX	290.10 Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16 (+5.72)
Morningstar Long/Short Commod	4703.45 (+27.75)

William Kay **Tempus**

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips



Solid foundations can survive storm

CRH

Market cap	2021 revenue
£24.1 billion	$29.2 billion

CRH has used a string of takeovers in Britain, Europe, Asia and the United States to become a global construction industry leader. While it doesn't actually slap cement on bricks, it is Europe and America's largest building materials supplier, with about 3,200 operating locations in 29 countries, employing 73,000 people.

That makes its shares an effective bet on how construction will cope with next year's expected international recession. Richard Branch, chief economist of the US-based Dodge Construction Network, an industry observer, expects the cash value of commercial building of all sorts to have mushroomed by 24 per cent this year but thinks it may shrink by 3 per cent in 2023. "We're walking the razor's edge," he said.

Nevertheless, last month CRH affirmed its $5.5 billion full-year earnings forecast for 2022, which would be a 10 per cent improvement on 2021. The slowdown is underlined by comparing that with the group's nine-month numbers. Sales grew by 13 per cent to $24.4 billion and earnings before interest, tax and other charges were up 14 per cent at $4.2 billion.

Albert Manifold, the chief executive, echoed Branch's caution. "There's probably a greater level of uncertainty than has been for the last couple of years and our experience tells us to perhaps cool our jets a little bit," he said. "We want to keep our balance sheet and keep capacity there, because the time to do deals is actually when we start to exit any phase of uncertainty."

The Europe Materials division has already buckled under pressure from dearer energy and the dollar's surge against the euro. The currency trend has reversed in the past few weeks, but not in time to prevent the division's pre-tax earnings falling by 19 per cent in the July-to-September quarter, after a 4 per cent rise in the first six months, when higher prices kicked in.

Earnings from the American operation, benefiting from the Biden administration's huge roadbuilding programme, grew by 8 per cent in the first nine months. The outstanding performer was Building Products, making a range from precast concrete pipes to patio crazy paving, with a 57 per cent profits increase. That is all the more creditable, given that housebuilding has been hit by higher interest rates, but renovation and maintenance have kept the tills ringing. Happily for CRH, many American firms are moving foreign production back home, including Intel and Samsung spending billions on new semiconductor plants.

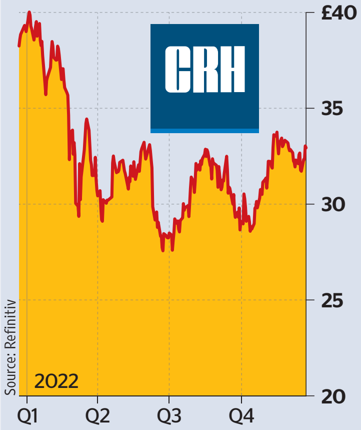
The group's fondness for corporate trading has continued unabated, spending $3 billion on 21 acquisitions until September 30 this year, $1.9 billion of the total going on Barrette Outdoor Living, an Ohio-based residential fencing and railing company. That has been outweighed by $4 billion in asset sales.

Although Manifold has hinted that the deal flow may ease next year, last week he announced a new venture capital unit to "support the development of new technologies and innovative solutions to meet the increasingly complex needs of customers and evolving trends in construction". CRH Ventures will have an initial $250 million purse, tiny compared with the group's £24 billion stock market value, but the group clearly is itching to pour in more money as required.

Two years ago this column recommended buying the shares at £29.86 and they rose to £39.15 by the start of this year. They lost ground as Russian troops massed on the Ukrainian border in January, but, after dipping below £30, have recovered to £33. That is an undemanding 11.7 times predicted earnings and offers a useful 3.1 per cent dividend yield. A $300 million share buyback plan is operating from now until the end of March, which will help to underpin the price.

Material growth

Share price



	H1	Q3	9 months to Sep
Sales change versus 2021			
Americas materials	+17%	+19%	+18%
Building products	+23%	+36%	+27%
Europe materials	+5%	-9%	0%
Group	+14%	+13%	+13%
Ebitda change versus 2021			
Americas materials	+12%	+5%	+8%
Building products	+54%	+62%	+57%
Europe materials	+4%	-19%	-6%
Group	+21%	+7%	+14%

ADVICE Hold
WHY The dividend is solid, but do not expect much from the share price for a while

DOMINO'S PIZZA GROUP

Market cap	2021 sales
£1.2 billion	£1.49 billion

When food banks are busier than ever and supermarket shoppers are ditching items at the checkout, pizzas might seem an expendable luxury. But, just as beer sales jump in glum times because drinkers want cheering up, so takeaways become a treat.

Empty pizza restaurants suggest some people have traded down to the likes of Domino's, which owns the UK and Ireland franchise and is a separate entity from the American parent. This column rated the shares a "hold" at 335p in August 2020 and they made encouraging progress until last Christmas, reaching a peak of 458p. Yet the well-documented problems of 2022 — Ukraine and inflation — took the price back to 220p three months ago. Since then the shares have climbed back to about 290p, helped by the company putting its products on the Just Eat delivery system.

Sales are partly event-driven. It mixed enough dough to bake a million pizzas for the England v France World Cup quarter-final, so investors will want to know how Domino's performed during the football tournament. The hints are promising. England's quarter-final exit may have knocked a little off sales, but there was enough interest in the semi-finals and final to have kept the pizza ovens fired. The cold weather will have done no harm.

Next year, the group plans to add another 50 UK stores to its existing 1,190, capitalising on the predicted decline in inflation. After a rebellion by franchisees a couple of years ago, contracts have been tweaked to impose national pricing and promotions and to pass on more raw material costs. However, it is easy for others to enter the market. If Starbuck's recent decision to nibble at pizzas takes off, other coffee shop chains may follow.

Based on the company's projected earnings before interest, tax and other charges of £125 million to £135 million for 2022, the price/earnings ratio is 14.9 and likely dividend yield is 3.3 per cent. Investec reckons pre-tax earnings will climb to £137.8 million next year and to £147.5 million in 2024.

ADVICE Buy
WHY A solid outlook as the economy recovers

NEWS IN BRIEF

Car production rises

Car production in Britain rose for a second consecutive month in November, up 5.7 per cent to 80,091 units, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said. Output has grown in six of the past seven months. Despite the overall rise, November's performance was still down on historic levels — 44.1 per cent below the pre-pandemic five-year average for the month and 25.7 per cent off 2019's total of 107,744 units. Production for the home market was up 59.1 per cent to 20,206 units, while export volumes fell 5 per cent to 59,885.

Finance chief to leave

Stephanie Bruce has told abrdn that she intends to step down as its chief financial officer. Bruce, 54, has been the asset manager's finance chief since June 2019. It is understood that she informed the board of her intentions earlier in the year. Her planned departure comes at a turbulent time for abrdn as it tries to stem outflows from its funds. "We are actively recruiting a replacement for her. There will be a smooth and orderly transition," a spokesman said.

People buy less food

People in poorer areas are buying less food after its cost rose at the strongest pace since 1977, according to the Office for National Statistics. Of those living in the most deprived areas, 61 per cent said they were buying less to eat in November as a result of higher costs. Eighty-one per cent of people surveyed by the Food Standards Agency said they were concerned about the cost of food during the Christmas and new year period, up from 62 per cent a year ago.

StanChart setback

The German financial regulator has ordered Standard Chartered to hold more capital in its European division because of organisational shortcomings at the business. The statement from BaFin is a setback for the bank, which is based in London but is focused on the fast-growing emerging markets of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. A bank spokesman said that it was co-operating with the German watchdog and was taking the matter "very seriously".

The usual prices service will resume in the new year

Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 7.30pm)

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	79.35	-1.04
BFOE(Feb)	81.03	-1.26
BFOE(Mar)	81.80	-0.92
WTI(Feb)	77.49	-0.80
WTI(Mar)	77.42	-0.82

Products ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

Premium Unld	754.00	756.00	+23.00
Gasoil EEC	881.00	882.00	+3.75
3.5 Fuel Oil	364.00	365.00	+12.00
Naphtha	609.00	610.00	+13.00

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Jan	894.00-893.50	Apr	838.75-834.00
Feb	883.75-883.50	May	817.50-817.00
Mar	865.25-864.75		Volume: 542498

Brent (9.00pm)

Dec	94.75-94.73	Mar	82.70-82.68
Jan	85.38-85.34	Apr	82.45-82.42
Feb	82.00-81.98		Volume: 1784087

LIFFE

Cocoa

Mar	2053-2051	May	1850-1834
May	1975-1966	Jul	1880-1827
Jul	1952-1943	Sep	1989-1825
Sep	1928-1926		
Dec	1944-1892		
Mar	1858-1795		Volume: 89533

RobustaCoffee

Jan	1963-1953	Sep	1825-1800
Mar	1880-1877	Nov	2025-1816
May	1851-1841		
Jul	1842-1805		Volume: 20695

White Sugar (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	506.50-505.00
		Dec	499.00-496.50
Mar	572.80-571.80	Mar	490.00-488.90
May	549.10-547.20	May	479.70-474.70
Aug	526.30-522.00		Volume: 59677

London Grain Futures, LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Jan	227.05	Mar	242.50	May	246.00
Jul	unq	Nov	232.05	Volume: 593	

London Metal Exchange (Official)

	Cash	3mth	Dec 22
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	8344.5-8345.5	8364.0-8365.0	8360.0-8370.0
Lead ($/tonne)	2275.0-2277.0	2235.0-2236.0	2245.0-2250.0
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	3006.0-3008.0	2982.0-2984.0	2900.0-2905.0
Alum Hi Gde ($/tonne)	2361.0-2362.0	2395.0-2397.0	2480.0-2485.0
Nickel ($/tonne)	28600.0-28650.0	28700.0-28750.0	29470.0-29520.0
Tin ($/tonne)			15mth
	23875.0-23925.0	23825.0-23875.0	23080.0-23130.0

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $1814.79

Close $1793.76-1793.98 **High** $1820.30

Low $1793.00

AM $1813.50 **PM** $1817.55

Krugerrand $1775.00-2871.00 (£1476.13-2387.59)

Platinum $991.00 (£824.14)

Silver $23.52 (£19.56)

Palladium $1674.00 (£1392.13)

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia $	1.801	
Canada $	1.643	-0.01
Denmark Kr	8.439	-0.05
Euro €	1.135	-0.01
Hong Kong $	9.377	-0.06
Hungary	455.296	-2.89
Indonesia	18744.286	-132.26
Israel Shk	4.205	
Japan Yen	159.090	-0.76
New Zealand $	1.923	
Norway Kr	11.871	-0.04
Poland	5.264	-0.05
Russia	83.121	-3.62
S Africa Rd	20.651	-0.15
Sweden Kr	12.581	-0.02
Switzerland Fr	1.119	
Turkey Lira	22.464	-0.14
USA $	1.203	-0.01

Rates supplied by Morningstar

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Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 3.50 ECB Refi 2.00 US Fed Fd 4.25-4.50

Halifax Mortgage Rate 5.74

Treasury Bills (Dis) Buy: 1 mth 2.830; 3 mth 3.617. Sell: 1 mth 2.580; 3 mth 3.095

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Interbank Rates	3.4601	0.0000	3.7952	4.3218	0.0000
Eurodollar Deps	4.35-4.41	4.68-4.93	4.85-4.91	4.96-5.21	5.26-5.43

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.4199-8.4832	8.4469-8.4481	153ds	415ds
Euro	1.1407-1.1322	1.1359-1.1358	17pr	42pr
Montreal	1.6326-1.6491	1.6438-1.6441	10pr	25pr
New York	1.1993-1.2146	1.2024-1.2025	10pr	24pr
Oslo	11.769-11.898	11.891-11.895	49ds	206ds
Stockholm	12.509-12.615	12.606-12.609	331ds	740ds
Tokyo	158.82-160.21	159.09-159.11	60ds	164ds
Zurich	1.1150-1.1215	1.1197-1.1199	34ds	88ds

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Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gilt Yield A ‡@	206.01	...	+0.27	...
Strategic Bond Fund ‡@	156.21	...	-0.32	2.63
UK Corp Bond C ‡@	104.79	...	-0.78	...
UK Eqty C ‡@	6317.26	...	-14.91	3.28
UK Eqty Inc A ‡@	323.51	...	+3.00	4.60
UK Gwth A ‡@	7982.40	...	+81.95	...
UK Index A Inc ‡@	1423.81	...	-5.83	3.01
UK Mid Cap A ‡@	4654.61	...	-11.35	0.07

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS LTD
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Capital R Acc ‡@	2176.23	...	+27.65	...
Euro Opps R Acc ‡@	91.26	...	-0.48	...
Euro Opps R Inc ‡@	85.36	...	-0.46	...
European Growth R Acc ‡@	382.33	...	+4.64	2.11
Global Energy R Acc ‡@	43.90	...	+1.02	1.10
Global Growth R Acc ‡@	341.09	...	+5.44	...
Global Income R Acc ‡@	157.81	...	+2.65	4.11
Global Income R Inc ‡@	100.43	...	+1.68	4.26
Global Select R Acc ‡@	150.03	...	+2.32	...
High Income R Inc ‡@	61.87	...	+0.22	4.38
Income R Acc ‡@	498.67	...	+5.49	3.91
Income R Inc ‡@	218.61	...	+2.40	4.03
Monthly Dist R Inc ‡@	65.42	...	+0.64	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	85.90	...	+0.66	...
Strategic Bond R M Acc ‡@	94.93	...	+0.14	2.99
Strategic Bond R M Inc ‡@	50.34	...	+0.08	3.05
Strategic Bond R Q Acc ‡@	94.76	...	+0.14	3.16
Strategic Bond R Q Inc ‡@	50.10	...	+0.08	3.21
UK Growth R Acc ‡@	657.09	...	+7.38	1.21
UK Smaller Cos R Acc ‡@	1836.00	...	+10.26	0.88
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡@	658.44	...	+8.26	1.07

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients: 0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc ‡@	572.40	...	-2.70	...
Gilt Acc @	201.30	211.80	+0.10	1.08
Gilt Inc @	74.35	78.24	-0.39	1.09
Health Acc ‡@	3016.00	...	+53.00	...
Jap Smlr Co Ac @	62.56	66.09	-0.19	0.30
Managed Inc ‡@	138.30	...	...	4.20
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	238.20	...	+1.60	...
UK Growth Inc ‡@	214.40	...	+2.30	0.64
UK Select Opps Inc ‡@	1882.00	...	+20.00	1.04
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡@	265.10	...	+1.70	0.04

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
AXA Trusts

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gen Acc ‡@	2101.00	...	+6.00	...
Gen Inc ‡@	1079.00	...	-2.00	...

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Acc A ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
Extra Inc Inc B ‡@	86.74	...	+0.24	1.16
Global Gwth Acc R ‡@	288.10	...	+4.10	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡@	162.30	...	+2.20	1.51
Pac Gwth Acc A ‡@	479.80	...	-17.60	2.30

CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Gwth ‡@	198.50	...	+2.40	...
Sus Leaders ‡@	750.80	...	+8.80	1.03
UK Growth ‡@	611.40	...	+7.50	2.01
UK Income ‡@	209.90	...	+1.60	...

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT LTD
0870 606 6402

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Beacon Inv ‡	84.88	...	+0.35	0.01

Dealing: 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	3548.24	...	+9.73	0.87

EDENTREE INV MGMT LTD
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Resp & Sust Sterling Bond ‡	85.77	...	+0.05	3.81
Resp & Sust Eurp Eq ‡	309.10	...	+4.10	...
Resp & Sust Glbl Eq ‡	309.60	...	+4.10	3.25
Resp & Sust Mgd Income ‡	121.60	...	+1.00	4.93
Resp & Sust UK Eq ‡	214.60	...	+2.30	0.97
Resp & Sust UK Equity Opps ‡	268.00	...	+2.30	0.88

F & C FUND MANAGEMENT LTD (OEICS)
Enqs: 0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 601 6083
Share Class 1 - Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bd ‡@	49.99	...	-0.31	1.57
Emerging Mkts ‡@	116.50	...	-0.50	...
Euro Gwth & Inc 1 ‡@	1134.00	...	+13.00	...
Extra Inc Bond ‡@	43.29	...	-0.02	1.85
FTSE All-Shr Track ‡@	418.90	...	+5.10	3.02
Global Gwth SC1 ‡@	301.20	...	+4.80	...
High Inc Trst @	11.13	11.74	+0.03	5.73
Max Inc Bond ‡@	42.63	...	+0.05	3.11
Multi Man Caut ‡@	70.41	...	...	3.18
Multi Man Distr ‡@	60.44	...	...	3.37
North Amer ‡@	805.90	...	+14.50	...
Pacific Gwth ‡@	493.70	...	+7.40	...
Strategic Bd ‡@	196.50	...	-0.40	1.80
UK Equity ‡@	3375.00	...	+41.00	1.26
UK Gwth & Inc Acc 1 ‡@	658.50	...	...	...
UK Gwth & Inc Dist ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
UK Smaller Cos ‡@	1015.00	...	+10.00	0.19

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts 0800 414161 Broker Dlgs 0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec Sits ‡@	2274.00	...	+26.00	...
American ‡@	4784.00	...	+64.00	...
Euro Opps ‡@	538.40	...	+4.40	...
European ‡@	3247.00	...	+29.00	0.32
Extra Income ‡@	22.31	...	-0.07	5.10
Glob Spec Sits ‡@	5243.00	...	+57.00	...
Global Focus ‡@	2786.00	...	+26.00	...
International ‡@	149.50	...	+0.20	0.08
Japan ‡@	529.60	...	+1.10	0.51
Moneybldr Bal ‡@	43.25	...	+0.21	...
Moneybldr Glob	327.60	327.60	-0.10	...
Moneybldr Gwth ‡@	76.12	...	-0.95	2.97
Moneybldr Inc ‡@	28.92	...	-0.11	4.36
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡@	124.70	...	+1.35	2.89

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Special Sits ‡@	4404.00	...	+66.00	...
Wealthbuilder	69.75	72.18	+0.53	0.44

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS LTD
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class `C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡@	31.78	...	+0.04	...
Ethical ‡@	106.90	...	+1.90	...
European ‡@	105.40	...	+1.40	1.90
Far Eastern ‡	112.80	...	+2.50	1.79
Fund of Inv Tst ‡@	132.80	...	+1.50	0.26
Intl Gwth ‡	121.30	...	+2.20	...
Japanese ‡	67.56	...	+0.78	...
North Amer ‡	143.60	...	+2.80	...
Smaller Cos ‡	105.30	...	+1.00	0.80
Special Sits ‡@	46.50	...	+0.47	...
UK Equity Inc ‡@	88.37	...	+1.04	...
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡@	68.35	...	+0.86	2.68
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡@	77.06	...	+0.94	2.54
UK Growth ‡@	79.79	...	+0.96	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK) LTD
Enq: 0845 745 6123 Dlg: 0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri 8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡@	886.28	...	+16.10	...
Amer Ind Inc ‡@	714.94	...	+13.01	...
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	1124.53	...	+13.73	2.34
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	718.47	...	+8.77	2.42
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡@	271.45	...	+3.38	3.14
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡@	123.31	...	+1.53	3.22
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡@	282.03	...	+4.62	2.28
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡@	174.11	...	+2.85	2.27
FTSE All-S Acc ‡@	690.45	...	+8.38	3.16
FTSE All-S Inc ‡@	349.07	...	+4.24	3.24
Jap Ind Acc ‡@	138.90	...	+1.38	1.97
Jap Ind Inc ‡@	108.25	...	+1.07	2.30
Pac Ind Acc ‡@	496.73	...	+8.82	2.59
Pac Ind Inc ‡@	312.61	...	+5.55	2.66

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced Acc ‡@	238.63	...	+2.53	0.59
Balanced Inc ‡@	151.95	...	-0.14	...
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	259.91	...	+0.18	4.79
Corp Bd Inc ‡@	101.64	...	+0.07	3.22
Gilt & Fd Int Acc ‡@	497.78	...	+1.62	1.19
Gilt & Fd Int Inc ‡@	74.17	...	+0.24	1.58
Income Acc ‡@	695.40	...	+8.65	4.28
Income Inc ‡@	290.82	...	+3.62	4.42
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.41	...	+0.77	3.21
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	126.71	...	+1.12	...
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	142.02	...	+1.69	4.15
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inc ‡@	63.90	...	+0.76	4.29
UK Gth & Inc Acc ‡@	142.02	...	+1.69	4.15
UK Gth & Inc Inc ‡@	63.90	...	+0.76	4.29

HSBC Specialist Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Acc ‡@	886.28	...	+16.10	...
American Index Retail Inc ‡@	714.94	...	+13.01	...
Asian Gth Acc ‡@	147.77	...	-0.07	...
Asian Gth Inc ‡@	130.99	...	-0.06	...
Chinese Eq Acc ‡@	513.81	...	+0.27	0.40
Chinese Eq Inc ‡@	434.76	...	+0.22	0.34
Euro Gth Acc ‡@	973.97	...	+4.05	...
Euro Gth Inc ‡@	817.05	...	+3.39	...

IGNIS ASSET MGMT
Dlg: 0141 222 8282

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Gth Inc @	322.55	340.42	-3.34	...
Balanced Growth @	262.17	276.69	-0.93	1.52
Balanced Growth Acc @	393.13	414.92	-1.40	1.49
Corporate Bond ‡@	99.69	...	-0.89	4.77
European Growth @	403.88	426.26	-3.57	...
European Growth Acc @	475.71	502.07	-4.21	...
Glob Gwth @	331.53	349.90	-3.09	0.12
Higher Yield @	83.98	88.64	-0.29	4.43
Higher Yield Acc @	275.04	290.28	-0.92	4.32
Japan @	49.06	51.78	-0.03	...
Managed @	130.89	138.15	-0.06	0.66
Managed Trust @	71.96	76.96	+0.17	...
Mngd Pfolio Inc @	95.54	100.84	-0.11	...
Pacific Grth @	498.71	526.34	-2.81	1.34
Smaller Comp @	756.24	798.14	+1.64	...
Smaller Cos @	628.94	663.79	+1.36	0.21

INSIGHT INVESTMENT FDS MANAGEMENT LTD
Client Servs: 0207 163 4000
Insight Investment Multi-Manager Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Well Bldr Bal Acc ‡@	96.05	...	-0.32	...
Well Bldr Gwth Acc ‡@	93.79	...	-0.36	...

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling: 0800 085 8571 Inv Serv: 0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv: 0800 028 2121
INVESCO Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Str Inc N/Trl ‡@	323.57	...	-0.12	7.05

INVESCO PERPETUAL Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Childrens Acc ‡@	439.16	...	+4.23	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	193.92	...	+0.17	1.24
High Income Inc ‡@	314.73	...	+3.37	3.22
Income & Grth Inc ‡@	404.70	...	+4.07	1.68
Income Inc ‡@	1235.95	...	+13.78	3.48
Money Acc ‡@	91.76	...	+0.02	0.47
Monthly Inc Plus Inc ‡@	91.60	...	+0.23	...
UK Aggressive Inc ‡@	154.28	...	-0.24	3.15
UK Growth Acc ‡@	875.25	...	+15.95	...
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡@	1335.03	...	+5.70	0.34
UK Sml Cos Gwth ‡@	82.54	...	+0.04	...

INVESTEC FUND MGRS
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900
OEIC Series i,ii,iii, & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡@	626.86	...	+8.35	...
Asia ex Japan A Acc ‡@	734.75	...	+16.63	...
Capital Accumulator A Acc ‡@	231.48	...	-3.81	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡@	375.76	...	+1.41	...
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡@	237.32	...	+0.89	...
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡@	129.07	...	+0.47	0.61
Diversified Growth A Inc ‡@	136.68	...	+0.50	...
Diversified Income A Acc ‡@	315.75	...	+0.73	...
Diversified Income A Inc ‡@	67.76	...	+0.16	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡@	112.21	...	+0.82	4.34
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc Gross ‡@	125.82	...	+0.20	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡@	65.33	...	+0.48	6.29
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡@	148.16	...	+2.16	...
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Acc ‡@	180.79	...	+1.66	4.52
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Inc ‡@	71.33	...	+0.66	4.78
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt Gross I Acc ‡@	220.49	...	-0.05	...
Enhanced Natural Resources A Acc ‡@	134.24	...	-1.25	...
Global Bond A Acc ‡@	139.30	...	+4.03	0.82
Global Bond A Inc ‡@	109.33	...	+3.00	0.82
Global Bond I Gross Inc ‡@	1167.00	...	+29.78	1.25
Global Dynamic A Acc ‡@	193.61	...	+1.95	0.47
Global Energy A Acc ‡@	170.97	...	-1.14	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡@	231.70	...	+3.11	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡@	299.36	...	+4.31	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡@	1154.68	...	+15.70	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡@	188.93	...	+1.51	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡@	302.48	...	+3.41	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡@	233.97	...	+2.64	...
Managed Growth A Acc ‡@	288.32	...	+1.86	...
Monthly High Income A Acc ‡@	243.45	...	+0.43	3.54
Monthly High Income A Inc ‡@	63.17	...	+0.01	5.01
Multi-Asset Protector A Acc ‡@	165.93	...	+0.16	...
Strategic Bond A Acc ‡@	244.54	...	+0.19	...
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	119.47	...	+0.09	...
Target Return A Acc ‡@	102.03	...	+0.44	0.82
Target Return A Inc ‡@	87.63	...	+0.01	0.87
UK Alpha A Acc ‡@	2540.23	...	+29.87	2.08
UK Blue Chip A Acc ‡@	770.11	...	+3.15	...
UK Smaller Companies A Acc ‡@	4581.62	...	+39.78	...
UK Smaller Companies A Inc ‡@	4109.43	...	+35.68	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡@	1264.62	...	+17.86	1.74
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡@	453.33	...	+6.40	1.78

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEICS)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investors Serv: 0800 832 832 Dlng: 0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stks Credit A Inc ‡@	113.30	...	+0.10	1.75
Asian Div Inc U Trst Inc ‡@	80.67	...	+1.26	5.79
Cautious Man Fd A Acc ‡@	277.80	...	+1.70	...
Cautious Man Fd A Inc ‡@	137.80	...	+0.80	...
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡@	1236.00	...	+35.00	...
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	193.00	...	+3.80	...
Erpn Grth Fund A Acc ‡@	287.40	...	+4.10	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	2160.00	...	+28.00	1.25
Fix Int Mnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡@	28.29	...	+0.04	5.11
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡@	4303.00	...	+69.00	...

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Equity Income A Inc ‡@	65.88	...	+0.91	3.32
Global Tech A Acc ‡@	2635.00	...	+49.00	...
Instl UK Idx Opps A Acc ‡@	111.95	...	+1.34	2.91
M-Asset Abs Ret A Acc ‡@	160.30	...	+0.40	...
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡@	249.60	...	+1.10	...
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡@	144.20	...	+0.70	2.60
M-Man Inc Grth Fd A Acc ‡@	184.20	...	+0.90	...
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡@	201.40	...	+0.10	1.45
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡@	55.28	...	+0.04	1.46
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	104.10	...	...	3.37
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡@	165.20	...	+0.20	...
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡@	134.20	...	+1.80	1.16
UK Irsh Sm Co Fd A Acc ‡@	742.50	...	-1.70	...
UK Property A Acc @	264.95	278.15	+0.01	2.63
UK Property A Inc @	105.80	111.07	...	2.68
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡@	1614.00	...	+22.00	...

JP MORGAN ASSET MGMT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Asia A Acc ‡@	259.00	...	+2.20	...
Emerging Mkts ‡@	261.50	...	+3.00	...
Eur Dyn (ex-UK) A Acc ‡@	270.30	...	+4.70	0.47
Euro Smllr Cos ‡@	864.00	...	+17.40	...
Europe A Acc ‡@	1734.00	...	+35.00	1.35
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Acc ‡@	117.30	...	+1.10	5.30
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Inc ‡@	30.89	...	+0.29	5.45
Gl ex-UK Bd A Acc ‡@	257.40	...	-0.70	...
Gl ex-UK Bd A Inc ‡@	196.80	...	-0.50	...
Glb Fins A Acc ‡@	1077.00	...	+1.00	1.03
Global A Acc ‡@	2049.00	...	+11.00	...
Japan A Acc ‡@	516.80	...	+6.20	...
Multi-Man Tst A Acc ‡@	1268.00	...	+16.00	...
Multi-Man Tst A Inc ‡@	1127.00	...	+15.00	...
Nat Resources ‡@	951.20	...	+17.30	...
New Europe A ‡@	155.70	...	+12.00	2.11
Portfolio ‡@	295.60	...	+0.40	0.98
Stg Corp Bd A Acc ‡@	85.59	...	-0.13	1.14
Stg Corp Bd A Inc ‡@	48.30	...	-0.08	1.14
UK Act 350 A Acc ‡@	199.00	...	-2.20	...
UK Dynamic Acc ‡@	206.70	...	+4.30	...
UK Dynamic Inc ‡@	148.20	...	+3.10	...
UK Equity A Acc ‡@	401.90	...	+0.60	3.45
UK Equity A Inc ‡@	46.44	...	+0.07	3.49
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Acc ‡@	167.10	...	-0.20	...
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Inc ‡@	90.29	...	-0.48	...

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Higher Inc A Acc ‡@	1132.00	...	+7.00	...
UK Higher Inc A Inc ‡	531.30	...	+2.00	...
UK Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	563.30	...	+7.00	0.34
UK Str Eq Inc A Acc ‡@	197.90	...	+3.50	...
UK Str Eq Inc A Inc ‡@	100.50	...	+1.77	...
US A Acc ‡@	1036.00	...	+25.00	...
US Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	976.20	...	+14.00	...

JUPITER UT MGRS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Absolute Return ‡@	32.52	...	+0.04	0.11
Distribution and Growth ‡@	94.73	...	+0.94	2.09
Emg Euro Opps ‡@	145.34	...	-31.23	...
Euro Special Sits ‡@	424.10	...	+5.08	...
European ‡@	2710.46	...	+31.02	...
Financial Opps ‡@	700.65	...	+9.40	0.20
Income Trust ‡@	498.17	...	+5.00	4.07
Merlin Bal (Acc) ‡@	223.30	...	+1.32	2.09
Merlin Gwth (Acc) ‡	518.90	...	+6.17	...
Merlin Inc (Acc) ‡@	332.84	...	+0.83	2.65
Merlin Wwide (Inc) ‡	365.44	...	+2.98	...
UK Growth ‡@	246.67	...	+3.32	...
UK Special Sits (Inc) ‡@	198.56	...	+2.26	2.02

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Acc @	2616.00	2639.00	-8.00	2.12
Equity Dist @	893.80	902.00	-2.70	2.15
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	497.60	...	+6.10	2.32
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	326.00	...	+4.00	2.37
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	128.30	...	+0.10	1.92
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	60.27	...	+0.06	1.94
Glob Gwth Acc @	243.90	243.90	-1.30	...
Glob Health Acc ‡@	112.00	...	+1.10	0.66
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	78.96	...	+0.05	0.09
Gwth Tst Acc @	106.00	106.50	-1.00	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	120.90	...	+0.50	5.37
Japan Ind Acc ‡@	67.92	...	+0.70	1.79
Pacific Ind Acc ‡@	199.30	...	+3.70	3.00
UK 100 Ind Acc @	180.90	180.90	+0.90	3.19
UK Active Opps Acc @	249.90	252.90	-0.10	...
UK Index Acc ‡@	338.50	...	+4.10	3.09
UK Index Dist ‡@	163.10	...	+2.00	3.17
US Ind Acc ‡@	769.20	...	+1.40	0.71
Worldwide Acc ‡@	328.30	...	+3.30	0.74

M & G SECURITIES
Enq: 0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1473.12	...	+13.93	...

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Smlr Cos Acc ‡	525.29	...	-3.39	...
Euro Smlr Cos Inc ‡	462.50	...	-3.00	0.69

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	692.38	...	+5.35	...
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	76.58	...	+0.12	1.42
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.26	...	+0.11	5.80
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	114.59	...	+0.34	...
Index Trckr Inc ‡	74.46	...	+0.92	3.60
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	24.66	...	+0.10	...
UK Select A Inc ‡	2725.98	...	+35.09	2.31

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	33.36	...	+0.05	3.23
Dividend Inc ‡	53.86	...	+0.54	...
Recovery A Inc ‡	106.59	...	+1.47	3.01
Sml Cos Inc ‡	345.81	...	+3.71	2.07

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	134.72	...	+0.98	2.65

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST LTD
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income	86.53	86.53	+0.22	4.63
High Income Acc	239.60	239.60	+0.60	4.31
UK 100 Comp Acc @	444.70	444.70	+7.50	3.10
UK 100 Cos @	220.30	220.30	+3.70	3.18
UK Select Pflo @	327.80	327.80	+5.60	3.15
UK Selection Port Acc @	678.30	678.30	+11.50	1.37
Worldwide Mgd Acc @	916.50	916.50	+7.40	1.03
Wwide Mgd @	539.10	539.10	+4.40	1.04

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD
Enquires: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Dev Opp Fund F Acc ‡@	774.10	...	+13.38	...
Dev Opp Fund I Acc ‡@	770.39	...	+13.32	...
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡@	918.31	...	+7.59	5.53
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡@	859.03	...	+7.09	5.73
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡@	917.19	...	+7.57	5.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡@	857.83	...	+7.08	5.75
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡@	928.16	...	+6.96	1.24
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡@	914.39	...	+6.87	1.25
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡@	927.02	...	+6.96	1.17
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡@	914.14	...	+6.86	1.18
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund F Inc ‡@	1285.73	...	+17.06	4.27
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Acc ‡@	1762.21	...	+23.37	4.23
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Inc ‡@	1376.90	...	+18.26	4.35
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1489.74	...	+13.49	1.04
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	13187.01	...	+177.75	...
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	1427.42	...	+12.91	1.05
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	3623.60	...	+48.84	0.96
Glob Ins Fund F Acc ‡@	472.62	...	+4.08	...
Glob Ins Fund F Inc ‡@	472.62	...	+4.09	...
Glob Ins Fund I Acc ‡@	470.69	...	+4.07	...
Glob Ins Fund I Inc ‡@	470.68	...	+4.06	...
Glob Sust Fund F Acc (PH) ‡@	1089.79	...	+9.16	0.99
Glob Sust Fund F Inc ‡@	1194.76	...	+15.30	0.92
Glob Sust Fund I Acc ‡@	1209.34	...	+15.48	...
Glob Sust Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1089.28	...	+9.14	0.78
Glob Sustain Fund F Acc ‡@	1215.46	...	+15.57	0.91
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡@	117.06	...	+0.11	3.07
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡@	92.97	...	+0.08	3.12
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡@	2490.12	...	+2.20	...
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡@	1320.95	...	+1.17	3.47
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Acc ‡@	919.07	...	-0.48	2.22
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Inc ‡@	888.44	...	-0.47	2.25
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Acc ‡@	915.34	...	-0.49	2.01
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Inc ‡@	888.00	...	-0.48	2.04
US Adv F F Acc ‡@	1303.08	...	+13.95	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡@	719.26	...	+4.25	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡@	1387.07	...	+14.83	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡@	754.00	...	+4.46	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Pfolio Inc ‡@	110.50	...	+0.40	...
Bal Port Gwth Acc ‡@	225.00	...	+0.60	1.20
Equity Inc Inc ‡@	197.70	...	+3.00	5.46
N&P UK Gwth Inc ‡@	182.80	...	+0.10	3.09
Stkmkt 100 Tkr @	256.60	256.60	+4.00	3.19
UK Growth Acc ‡@	439.10	...	+7.00	3.14
UK Growth Inc ‡@	234.50	...	+3.70	3.22

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRS LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Inc	1777.00	1873.48	+4.40	...
Far Eastern Inc	584.69	617.09	-0.73	1.42
Intl Growth Inc	380.56	400.59	+0.02	0.75
Japanese Inc	41.85	41.85	+0.43	...
Mutual European	2762.93	2908.99	-21.63	...
Mutual Far Eastern	960.80	1014.04	+17.38	0.90
Mutual North Am	1983.00	2092.88	+6.23	0.24
Mutual UK Eq	1391.59	1468.70	+17.17	2.83
Nth American Inc	1227.65	1295.67	-7.28	...
UK Equity Inc	546.89	577.19	+6.31	3.18

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MGRS
0845 300 2244
Authorised Inv Funds (OEICs)
OEIC A Class
Managed Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Port A Acc ‡@	237.60	...	+0.80	0.01
Caut Port A Acc ‡@	207.10	...	+0.30	...
Caut Port A Inc ‡@	152.00	...	+0.30	...
Opps Port A Acc ‡@	280.20	...	+1.30	...
Prog Port A Acc ‡@	266.60	...	+1.10	...

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Eur Sel Gth A Acc ‡@	3286.00	...	+64.00	0.49

Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡@	372.70	...	+6.40	3.16
UK Trkr A Inc ‡@	186.90	...	+3.20	3.24

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	277.20	...	+0.30	2.14
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	103.20	...	...	2.16
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡@	376.40	...	+6.80	1.34
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	227.30	...	+0.60	5.27
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	68.17	...	+0.18	5.42
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	369.10	...	+5.10	4.20
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	115.20	...	+1.60	4.30
Safety Plus A Acc ‡@	40.49	...	...	...
Strat Inc A Acc ‡@	182.80	...	+0.10	3.10
Strat Inc A Inc ‡@	80.90	...	+0.04	3.24
UK Gwth A Acc ‡@	189.00	...	+3.50	...
UK Sel Gwth A Acc ‡@	2161.00	...	+41.00	...

OEIC B Class
Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡@	411.40	...	+7.10	3.25
UK Trkr B Inc ‡@	185.80	...	+3.20	3.34

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond B Acc ‡@	370.70	...	+0.90	...
Corp Bond B Inc ‡@	136.30	...	+0.30	...
UK Gwth B Acc ‡@	205.60	...	-0.30	1.79
UK Sel Gwth B Acc ‡@	2481.00	...	...	1.09

OEIC C Class
UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Gth C Inc ‡@	125.80	...	+2.40	3.82
UK Sel Gwth C Acc ‡@	2598.00	...	...	1.29

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡@	87.87	...	+0.08	1.24
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡@	49.42	...	+0.04	1.25
AAA Income Acc ‡@	95.61	...	+0.08	1.67
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡@	208.40	...	+3.60	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	151.80	...	+0.20	3.09
Corp Bond Inc ‡@	50.84	...	+0.07	...
Euro Eq Gth Acc ‡@	239.50	...	+2.00	0.27
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡@	146.60	...	+1.30	...
Glob Advtg Acc ‡@	193.60	...	+1.80	...
Glob Eq Uncstrd Acc ‡@	155.60	...	+2.40	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡@	138.90	...	+0.10	4.39
Higher Inc Inc ‡@	43.28	...	+0.03	4.49
Japan Eq Gth Acc ‡@	127.40	...	...	...
Managed Acc ‡@	361.90	...	+5.40	0.41
Select Inc Acc ‡@	91.51	...	...	2.21
Select Inc Inc ‡@	51.26	...	-0.26	2.21
UK Eq Gth Acc ‡@	358.60	...	+4.90	1.88
UK Eq Hi Alpha ‡@	221.10	...	+3.00	...
UK Eq Hi Inc Acc ‡@	269.60	...	+3.30	...
UK Eq Hi Inc Inc ‡@	74.17	...	+0.91	...
UK Ethical Acc ‡@	191.90	...	+2.00	1.43
UK Opps Acc ‡@	228.60	...	+1.80	0.62
UK Opps Inc ‡@	206.40	...	+1.60	0.62
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡@	773.30	...	+5.50	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡@	130.54	...	+1.29	0.77
Balanced A Inc ‡@	116.65	...	+1.15	0.77
Cautious A Acc ‡@	109.60	...	+0.58	...
Cautious A Inc ‡@	94.96	...	+0.50	...
Dynamic A Acc ‡@	317.51	...	+3.82	...
Dynamic A Inc ‡@	286.81	...	+3.45	...
Growth A Acc ‡@	327.29	...	+3.59	...
Income A Acc ‡@	240.98	...	+1.79	...
Sterling Bond Acc ‡@	242.37	...	-0.28	...
Sterling Bond Inc ‡@	97.00	...	-0.11	...

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0683000
Intermediary Serv: 0800 0684000
Institutional Shares (Class 2) (500000 GBP)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle UK Eq Opps Ins Inc ‡@	120.34	...	+1.36	1.56

Retail Shares (Class 1)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡@	35.84	...	+0.04	4.17
Threadneedle Mthly Etr Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	78.15	...	+0.73	3.36
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Ins Inc ‡@	52.70	...	+0.06	2.12
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Rtl Inc ‡@	52.63	...	+0.07	1.75
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡@	44.76	...	+0.09	1.30
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡@	40.51	...	+0.05	3.13
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	95.89	...	+1.15	3.46
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	89.84	...	+1.06	2.70
Threadneedle UK Insti Rtl ‡@	176.36	...	+2.03	1.82
Threadneedle UK Mthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	67.73	...	+0.71	4.04
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡@	128.05	...	+1.42	1.49
Threadneedle UK Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡@	333.75	...	+3.51	...

For Resolution see Ignis
TU FUND MANAGERS LIMITED

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
British	879.30	879.30	+11.50	0.35
European	210.70	219.40	+1.00	...

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
125.79	119.17	Tr IL 1⅞% 22	123.94	– .29	1.56	–1.06
389.95	359.04	Tr IL 2½% 24 *	376.59	+ .94	1.44	–0.30
111.32	100.58	Tr IL 0⅛% 24	102.25	+ .04	...	–1.65
118.20	96.90	Tr IL 0⅛% 26	101.43	+ .17	...	–0.31
171.48	75.20	Tr IL 0⅛% 41	95.81	+ .24	...	0.36
189.40	82.66	Tr IL 0⅝% 42	104.99	+ .26	0.60	0.36
178.09	72.26	Tr IL 0⅛% 44	93.92	+ .30	...	0.42
184.87	70.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 46	92.86	+ .35	...	0.45
215.38	80.78	Tr IL 0¾% 47	106.69	+ .45	0.72	0.47
132.58	99.85	Tr IL 1¼% 27	106.61	+ .36	1.28	–0.09
127.38	93.33	Tr IL 0⅛% 28	101.03	+ .50	...	–0.06
195.13	66.79	Tr IL 0⅛% 48	91.78	+ .43	...	0.47
216.99	72.64	Tr IL 0½% 50	101.25	+ .47	...	0.45
214.51	65.69	Tr IL 0¼% 52	95.19	+ .45	...	0.43
283.46	88.77	Tr IL 1¼% 55	125.85	+ .69	1.09	0.41
228.09	60.50	Tr IL 0⅛% 56	91.61	+ .64	...	0.39
234.99	60.14	Tr IL 0⅛% 58	91.19	+ .66	...	0.39
270.49	64.93	Tr IL 0⅜% 62	101.26	+ .91	...	0.34
278.97	55.87	Tr IL 0⅛% 65	93.70	+ .97	...	0.28
300.89	54.65	Tr IL 0⅛% 68	93.60	+1.11	...	0.28
353.90	55.40	Tr IL 0⅛% 73	98.81	+1.25	...	0.15
129.06	92.36	Tr IL 0⅛% 29	100.67	+ .46	...	0.02
137.95	90.61	Tr IL 0⅛% 31	101.71	+ .36	...	–0.07
401.24	301.39	Tr IL 4⅛% 30 *	337.77	+1.71	1.91	0.19
157.27	99.08	Tr IL 1¼% 32	112.22	+ .45	1.11	0.02
154.94	92.56	Tr IL 0¾% 34	106.58	+ .39	...	0.16
318.19	206.76	Tr IL 2% 35 *	242.77	+ .92	1.00	0.34
155.32	82.01	Tr IL 0⅛% 36	98.14	+ .21	...	0.26
179.71	94.08	Tr IL 1⅛% 37	111.82	+ .22	1.06	0.31
161.53	78.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 39	96.53	+ .23	...	0.34
177.61	84.60	Tr IL 0⅝% 40	104.69	+ .26	...	0.34

Longs (Over 15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
142.32	94.91	Tr 4¼% 36	104.47	– .25	4.07	3.82
109.25	67.54	Tr 1¾% 37	76.20	– .21	...	3.89
157.15	98.36	Tr 4¾% 38	109.90	– .29	4.32	3.91
99.98	58.05	Tr 1⅛% 39	66.78	– .21	...	3.93
150.89	92.08	Tr 4¼% 39	103.85	– .25	4.09	3.93
153.58	91.30	Tr 4¼% 40	103.49	– .21	...	3.98
101.97	54.72	Tr 1¼% 41	64.46	– .19	...	3.94
141.12	76.78	Tr 3¼% 44	89.95	– .25	...	3.96
163.25	93.79	Tr 4½% 42	107.39	– .30	4.19	3.96
147.82	79.61	Tr 3½% 45	93.32	– .26	...	3.96
167.45	89.35	Tr 4¼% 46	104.43	– .28	4.07	3.96
94.30	43.93	Tr 0⅞% 46	53.90	– .20	...	3.93
108.32	51.06	Tr 1½% 47	62.02	– .20	...	3.92
115.21	53.78	Tr 1¾% 49	65.05	– .22	...	3.90
175.82	89.75	Tr 4¼% 49	105.20	– .28	4.04	3.94
88.98	35.82	Tr 0⅝% 50	45.55	– .17	...	3.82
204.67	63.35	Tr 0⅛% 51	91.44	+ .43	...	0.45
103.72	44.40	Tr 1¼% 51	55.06	– .18	...	3.86
169.37	82.51	Tr 3¾% 52	97.89	– .28	...	3.87
111.89	46.78	Tr 1½% 53	58.34	– .21	...	3.82
115.71	48.25	Tr 1⅝% 54	60.15	– .20	...	3.79
191.48	90.79	Tr 4¼% 55	108.38	– .32	3.92	3.80
121.73	49.39	Tr 1¾% 57	62.14	– .24	...	3.70
196.16	87.32	Tr 4% 60	106.00	– .37	...	3.70
85.61	26.21	Tr 0½% 61	36.39	– .20	...	3.52
156.73	60.88	Tr 2½% 65	76.04	– .30	...	3.61
197.97	79.01	Tr 3½% 68	97.22	– .40	...	3.63
132.22	42.99	Tr 1⅝% 71	56.56	– .30	...	3.48

Mediums (5-15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
100.41	97.34	Tr 0¾% 23	98.57	+ .02	...	3.25
102.87	98.04	Tr 2¼% 23	99.22	+ .01	...	3.38
98.93	94.34	Tr 0⅛% 24	96.20	+ .06	...	3.66
100.99	94.79	Tr 1% 24	96.70	+ .08	...	3.56
105.66	96.82	Tr 2¾% 24	98.50	+ .08	...	3.67
113.70	100.77	Tr 5% 25	102.91	– .05	4.86	3.61
100.06	90.15	Tr 0⅝% 25	93.28	– .04	...	3.51
104.89	93.15	Tr 2% 25	96.02	– .04	...	3.55
97.82	86.33	Tr 0⅛% 26	90.18	– .08	...	3.49
103.77	89.28	Tr 1½% 26	93.05	– .08	...	3.58
103.12	85.65	Tr 1¼% 27	90.20	– .12	...	3.59
120.54	98.23	Tr 4¼% 27	102.87	– .15	4.13	3.61
96.50	79.15	Tr 0⅛% 28	84.05	– .11	...	3.57
106.04	84.72	Tr 1⅝% 28	90.15	– .14	...	3.51
135.60	107.13	Tr 6% 28	112.51	– .15	5.33	3.64
97.99	77.61	Tr 0½% 29	83.06	– .16	...	3.62
100.77	78.21	Tr 0⅞% 29	84.03	– .19	...	3.53
96.14	72.39	Tr 0⅜% 30	78.55	– .14	...	3.54
133.89	101.89	Tr 4¾% 30	108.50	– .17	4.38	3.52
94.12	69.25	Tr 0¼% 31	75.40	– .10	...	3.60
100.52	73.06	Tr 1% 32	79.63	– .11	...	3.65
133.22	98.13	Tr 4¼% 32	105.34	– .15	4.03	3.58
99.08	68.57	Tr 0⅞% 33	75.28	– .14	...	3.72
141.79	98.89	Tr 4½% 34	106.99	– .25	4.21	3.76
94.21	61.24	Tr 0⅝% 35	68.20	– .16	...	3.83

Shorts (under 5 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
99.73	98.87	Tr 0⅛% 23	99.73	+ .01	...	2.69
98.62	90.04	Tr 0¼% 25	92.87	– .03	...	3.80
98.23	84.28	Tr 0⅜% 26	88.51	– .10	...	3.61

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by Morningstar. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last month's ending share price
12 month high and low Please note the 12 month high and low figures for shares supplied by Morningstar are based on intra-day figures, not closing prices.

Automobiles & parts

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
541½	89½	Aston Martin Lag	150¾	- 6	...	-0.9

Banking & finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
252¾	133	**abrdn**	185⅞	- 5	7.8	4.0
3266	1729	**Admiral**	2078	+ 2	7.2	10.6
73½	33½	ADVFN♦	33½	...	4.4	5.8
390	246⅛	AJ Bell	358	- 3⅜	1.9	33.5
27304⅝	20338⅝	Aon Corpn	24944½	- 246⅞	0.5	60.8
42⅛	21½	Appreciate Group♦	40⅝	- ¼	2.4	17.7
1030	645	Arbuthnot Bkg♦	857½	...	1.8	18.9
20	11	Argo Group♦	11	...	...	5.0
297¾	180⅞	Ashmore Gp	232½	- 5⅛	7.2	7.9
1569¾	1155¼	Aus New Z	1333⅛	- 5½	...	...
602⅞	373¾	**Aviva**	446	- 3¼	4.7	58.6
290⅞	193⅜	Banco Santander	245⅜	- 2⅜	2.6	5.8
2635	986	Bank of Georgia	2555	+ 15	...	7.9
217	135⅝	**Barclays**	157⅛	- ⅞	1.9	3.8
½	...	Blue Star Capital♦	⅛	...	...	2.8
359	277	BP Marsh&Ptnrs♦	302	+ 3	0.8	8.3
34	7⅞	Braveheart Inv♦	9¾	+ ¼	...	0.2
517	266	Brewin Dolphin	515	+ 1	2.8	28.1
493	173⅞	Bridgepoint	189¾	- 2⅝	...	11.8
82	40	Cenkos Secs♦	44	...	7.9	8.9
325	256½	Chesnara	285	+ 1	7.7	15.8
68	31	City of Lon Gp♦	40	- 12¾	...	-2.7
530	343½	City Lon Inv Gp	429	- 21	7.6	10.0
1452	894	Close Bros	1059	- 6	5.6	7.9
317	211½	CMC Markets‡	227	+ 1	13.4	6.9
802¾	491⅞	Commerzbk	780½	- 3¼	...	40.0
1260⅝	661⅞	Deutsche Bk	937¼	- ⅝	...	10.9
312¼	177⅝	Direct Line Ins	217½	- 1⅝	10.2	9.0
59½	57	Downing ONE VCT	57	...	4.3	7.7
1⅛	⅜	Drumz♦	⅞	...	...	-7.5
180	74⅜	EFG-Hermes Hldg	95½	+ 8¼	...	6.1
359	122½	EPE Special Opps♦	155	+ 5	...	8.6
967⅛	660¾	FBD	967⅛	...	...	4.3
72½	67½	Fiske♦	67½	...	...	12.0
83½	59	Frenkel Topping♦	73½	+ ¼	1.8	42.7
761	458½	Georgia Capital	752	+ 3	...	2.0
1005	710	Gresham House♦	734	- 21	0.8	29.4
506	273	H&T Group♦	477	+ 6	1.7	15.2
52	33	Hansard Global	39¼	...	11.3	13.5
1391	740¾	**Hargreaves L**	843¾	- 12	4.5	15.0
194⅞	143⅜	Helios Under♦	157½	...	1.9	...
567⅛	441¾	**HSBC**	512¼	+ 1	3.1	11.1
847½	648	IG Group	786	- 3½	5.5	8.0
1472	500	Impax♦	707	- 12	1.4	23.3
2208	953⅛	Intermed Cap‡	1135	- 14½	4.9	6.5
142⅜	67½	IPF	67½	+ ¼	3.2	3.7
173¾	136	Intl Public Pntshp	150¾	- 1⅜	4.9	19.3
536¾	351½	Investec‡	509	- 1⅜	2.5	12.7
320	253	Investment Co	280	...	0.3	10.0
123¾	52¾	IP Group	57⅛	...	1.7	2.1
300	94	Jarvis Securities♦	146	- 1½	9.2	10.5
265	83¾	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	126⅛	- 1⅝	13.5	4.6
95⅜	55⅞	Just Group	78	...	...	...
645	346½	Lancashire Hdgs	645	+ 18	1.7	...
307¾	204	**Legal & Gen**	250	- 2⅞	7.1	7.6
50502½	502⅝	Liberty Group	502⅝	- 2⅝	...	...
2200	704	Liontrust‡	1056	- 26	4.4	13.2
62	38⅛	Livermore Invs♦	38⅛	...	9.2	2.4
55⅛	39	**Lloyds Bkg Gp**	46	- ⅛	5.5	6.4
36	29¼	LMS Capital	29½	- ⅞	3.0	12.8
8582	6370	**Lond Stk Ex Gp**	7188	+ 34	1.0	73.5
227¼	159⅞	**M&G**	186¼	- ⅜	9.8	58.2
274⅞	178¾	Man	217⅞	- 1	3.8	8.7
19½	7½	Manx Fin♦	19½	+ ¾	0.8	9.9
3⅜	2	Marechale Cap♦	2⅛	+ ⅛	...	1.0
14625⅞	11813⅝	Marsh McLn	13760⅜	- 171⅝	1.4	28.6
890	530	Mattioli Woods♦	625	...	3.3	...
21¾	11	Metal Tiger♦	12⅛	+ ⅛	...	4.6
122	69	Metro Bank	122	+ 3⅛	...	-0.8
1849¼	1426½	Nat Aust Bk	1694⅝	+ 14⅜	2.8	16.8
283⅜	207⅝	**NWG**	264½	- ½	3.9	10.4
343	170⅜	Numis♦‡	193	- 6	6.2	3.9
599	375⅜	Onesavings Bank	471⅛	- 6⅛	4.1	6.2
691	498½	PayPoint‡	498½	- 1½	6.4	15.6
14	¼	PCF Group♦	⅞	+ ¼	...	-0.4
701⅜	506¾	**Phoenix Gp**	607½	- 4	7.9	-7.0
366	136¼	Provident	180½	+ ½	...	3.3
1337	797½	**Prudential**	1099½	+ 7	1.0	17.8
3	⅞	Quantum Blockchain♦	1¼	...	...	-6.8
179½	82	Quilter	91⅜	- 1⅛	5.8	65.2
175⅜	59	Randall & Quilter♦	59½	+ ⅜	6.5	88.8
2210	1518	Rathbone Grp	2030	- 20	3.6	15.7
1⅜	½	RiverFort Global Opps♦	¾	...	2.6	2.2
1715	1370	Rockwood Strategic	1715	...	1.6	2.5
2830	1905	S & U	2150	- 40	4.1	10.1
2½	1½	Sancus Lending Grp♦	1½	...	...	-0.6
60¾	40¾	Schroder REIT	41½	- ½	6.1	4.4
718¾	358¾	**Schroders**	434	- 8⅝	26.7	2.0
1731½	920	**St James Place**	1087	- 21½	5.6	20.7
638½	426	**Stand Chart**	625	- ¾	1.4	14.0
15½	7¼	Starvest♦	7½	...	...	-1.2
33	22½	STM Group♦	29	...	4.8	11.1
4436⅛	3243¾	Sun Life Can	3810⅛	- 51⅛	3.5	9.7
10	3⅝	Tavistock Inv♦	6⅞	+ ⅛	0.7	1.1
2270	901	TBC Bank Group	2190	- 10	1.6	6.4
16¾	7	Tern♦	8¼	- ¾	...	6.2
27	15¼	Time Finance♦	20¾	...	...	12.6
1275	900	Volvere♦	1175	...	...	...
48½	23	WH Ireland♦	23	...	...	12.9
33½	27	Walker Crips Grp	29½	...	2.5	84.2
4833¾	3063½	Wells Fargo	3349¾	- 68½	1.7	9.1
1356⅝	1056⅛	Westpac	1307⅝	...	3.6	17.7
30	21½	Worsley Investors Ltd	25	+ ½	...	78.4
40634¼	34129¼	Zurich Fincl	39767⅞	+ 62½	4.0	15.5

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	Dis(-) or Pm
1477	1042	**3I Group**	1321	- 8	3.2	-8.5
368½	248¾	3i Infrastructure	323½	...	3.3	1.0
104½	83⅛	Abrdn Div I&G	93	- ½	4.7	-19.2
1488	1066	Aberforth Smlr	1300	...	2.5	-10.4
1046	867¾	Alliance	936	- 9	2.3	-4.2
512	352	Asia Dragon Tr	420	+ 2	1.3	-10.0
248	183½	Athelney Trust	210	...	4.5	-7.5
1088⅞	169	AVI Global Trust	186½	- ⅜	1.5	-9.3
385½	206¼	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	264	+ 1	1.6	-7.3
149½	73½	Baillie Gifford Eu Gr	86⅞	- 1⅜	0.3	-12.8
1004	657	Baillie Gifford Jpn Tr	754	- 4	1.1	-5.5
229	131¼	Baillie Gifford SN	151	- 1½	...	-7.0
246	139⅜	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	163¾	- 2	2.0	-11.4
124½	90⅞	Bankers	99	+ ⅛	2.0	-8.9
5232	3610	BH Macro	4500	- 20	...	9.7
1217½	722¼	Biotech Growth	920	+ 1	...	-8.7
151	95	BlckRck Com Inc	135½	- ½	3.0	-1.3
140	114	BlckRck Fro Inv	129	...	3.7	-9.2
704	396	BlckRck Grt Euro	464	- 17	1.3	-3.3
206	164	BlckRck Inc & Gwth	191	+ 1	3.5	-6.5
457	330	BlckRck Latin Am	378	+ 2	4.9	-10.1
215	183¼	BlckRck Sustain American Inc	198½	- 1½	3.6	-2.9
2140	1162	BlckRck Smlr	1342	- 6	2.4	-13.3
975⅝	477⅞	BlckRck Throgmorton	590	- 5	1.7	-3.5
804⅞	524	BlckRck Wld Min	689	- 8	6.4	1.0
24¼	6	Blue Plan Int Fn#	8½	- ⅜	...	-12.7
340	256	BMO Cap&Inc	297	- 2	3.9	...
124⅛	68½	BMO Comm Prop	86½	- 1½	3.3	-36.7
172¾	122	BMO Glbl Smaller	144⅜	+ ⅜	1.1	-11.2
520	375½	BMO Priv Eq Ord	420	+ 4	3.3	-41.4
101	66⅜	BMO Real Estate	66¾	- ⅛	3.3	-45.0
94⅜	71	BMO UK HIT	82½	...	6.1	-8.1
95	79	BMO UK HIT B	84	...	...	-6.4
376	294	BMO UK HIT UNIT	330	...	4.5	-8.1
1495	1072½	Brown Advsr US Smlr	1230	+ 20	...	-12.0
1130	888	Brunner	992	- 13	1.8	-12.7
4075	3015	Caledonia Inv	3580	- 10	4.7	-28.4
191	141	Invesco BondInc	166	+ 1	6.9	1.8
427	363¼	City of Lon IT	408	- 2	5.0	2.0
123½	95	Crystal Amber Fd	97½	...	23.2	-23.1
555	452¾	Dunedin Entp	500	...	8.9	-9.0
653½	537	Edinburgh IT	632	- 3	3.8	-7.4
305	154½	Edin Wwide	173¾	- 1	...	-8.7
324¼	268	EP Global Opp	315	...	1.4	-13.3
140½	74½	European Assets	90	- ½	8.9	-5.4
847	608	European Opp Tr	713	- 2	0.3	-14.0
942	767⅛	**F&C Investment Tr**	896	- 14	1.4	-1.6
497	406⅛	Fidlty Asian Val	489	+ 8	2.7	-6.9
318¼	181⅞	Fidelity China Sp	238½	+ 1½	2.1	-8.8
384¼	256½	Fidlty Euro Val	320	- 2	2.1	-5.5
235½	143	Fidlty Jap Tru	170	+ 2¾	...	-7.7
311	232	Fidlty Spec Val	279	- 2½	2.3	-3.5
925	731¾	Fins Gwth & Inc	838	- 3	1.9	-5.0
120⅛	85⅝	GCP Infrastructure	101½	- ⅛	6.3	-9.6
824	552⅝	Gen Emer Mkts	595	+ 1	1.9	-11.7
55	28½	Gldn Prosp Prc Mtl	34½	...	...	-8.4
168½	130⅜	Greencoat UK Wind	152⅛	+ ⅜	5.9	-1.9
218	166	Hansa Investment	180	...	1.0	-40.3
218⅞	168	Hansa Inv Co 'A'	175½	+ 3	1.0	-42.7
2860	1986	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	2235	...	...	-45.7
164½	120½	Hend Euro Foc	147	- ½	2.1	-12.4
185½	137¼	Hend High Inc	165½	+ 1½	6.1	-0.5
1242	674¼	Hend Smlr	821	- 5	2.6	-8.8
2510	1540	Herald	1762	+ 4	...	-16.2
457½	310	HgCapital Trust	353	- 4	1.6	-20.6
184⅞	138⅞	HICL Infra	162⅛	- 1	5.0	-0.5
282	216	Highbridge Tactical	244	+ 1	...	-9.0
1288	928	ICG Ent Tr	1170	+ 4	1.1	-37.1
560	370⅞	Impax Env Mkts	416½	...	0.6	-1.3
365⅝	280	Invesco Asia Tr	332	+ 2	4.0	-10.8
191	141	Invesco BondInc	166	+ 1	6.9	1.8
176	111	IPST Bal	130½	...	...	-14.4
250	200	IPST Gbl Eq	228	- 1	2.8	-9.5
102⅝	93	IPST Managed	98	...	0.9	-8.4
199⅞	141	IPST UK Eq	163½	- 3	3.6	-9.0
617⅞	373½	IP UKSmallerCos	419	- 9	1.7	-13.2
800	650	JPM American	684	- 7	0.9	-1.4
454¼	294½	JPM Asia	358½	+ 7	4.2	-9.9
510	246½	JPM Chinese	333	- 3½	5.9	-5.9
778	610¼	JPM Claverhs	700	- 4	4.6	0.1
105	99	JPM Elect Mg C	103	...	0.2	-0.4
1115¼	886¼	JPM Elect Mg G	937½	...	2.0	-3.4
111	88	JPM Elect Mg I	100	...	4.6	-0.9
129	91	JPM Em Mkts	109⅛	+ ¾	1.1	-6.8
548	339	JPM Euro disc	397½	- 2	1.5	-14.5
148	108	JPM GEMI	126	+ 3	3.7	-10.3
474	386	JPM GG&I	426	...	3.7	-0.8
898	691¼	JPM Indian	834	+ 4	...	-16.5
493	301	JPM Jap Sml Co	327	- 1	4.4	-7.0
675	408½	JPM Japan#	457½	- 5	1.0	-5.9
1375	735	JPM Mid Cap	875	- 6	2.9	-11.6
108¼	85¼	JPM Multi-Ass Grw & Inc	94¾	- ½	4.3	-0.1
748	55⅛	JPMorgan Emerg E, ME & Africa Sec Plc	84	- 1	53.7	82.4
404	230	JPM Smllr Co	282	- 2	2.1	-9.0
318⅞	174	Keystone IT	206	- 7	1.6	-12.2
829	649	Law Debenture	761	- 15	4.0	2.4
143¼	99	Lowland	122	+ 1½	4.8	-7.6
235	156¾	Majedie	192	...	4.6	-19.8
428	272⅛	M Currie Port	294	- 4	1.3	-1.5
121⅞	90	Marwyn Val In	95	...	5.3	-44.6
272	158¼	Mercantile IT	193½	- 3	3.1	-12.7
591	480	Merchants	557	- 2	5.0	1.0
864	639¾	Mid Wynd	693	- 13	1.4	0.6
1385⅞	875	Monks Inv Tst	945½	- 16½	0.2	-9.4
221	104⅛	Montanaro Eur Sml	133	- 1	0.6	-8.7
928	715	Murray Income Trust	833	- 2	4.0	-6.2
1352	1090	Murray Int	1330	...	4.2	1.5
90½	70¾	Nb Global Floating	71¾	- 1⅛	6.8	-8.5
370¼	286¼	Pacific Assets	357	+ 4	0.4	-7.2
342½	229⅛	Pantheon Int	258½	...	...	-46.0
3085	2295	**Pershing Sq**	2845	- 65	0.8	-32.4
507	465½	Personal Assets	476	- 1	1.4	0.9
2751¼	1732	Polar Cap Tech	1740	- 44	...	-11.3
202	143⅛	Prem Glb & Inf	155½	...	3.8	-13.2
148½	112½	Renewables Inf	130⅛	+ ¾	5.1	-3.5
2740	1928	RIT Cap Ptnr	2050	+ 25	...	-17.4
750	456⅛	Riverstone	656	- 20	...	-48.1
508	366½	Schroder TotRt	403	- 3	1.9	-5.3
592	446	Schrd Asia Pac	509	+ 2	1.7	-10.6
319½	254½	Schrod Inc Gwth	301	+ 1	4.4	0.5
218	185⅞	Schrod Jap Gwth	204	- 2	2.1	-10.1
718	454	Schrod UKMid	546	- 2	2.6	-13.0
34⅛	14¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	15½	+ ½	...	-50.2
546	434	Scot American	505	- 2	2.7	1.6
1358⅝	670½	**Scot Mtge**	717	- 16⅛	0.4	-10.3
242	207	Secs Tst Scot	221	- 3	2.6	-0.4
107⅜	75½	Sequoia Eco	85½	- 1⅜	6.7	-7.0
255¾	195⅛	Temple Bar	218½	- 2½	3.7	-5.3
179½	130	Tplton Emg Mkt	145½	+ ½	2.2	-13.0
⅜	⅛	Tiger Royal and Invest♦	⅛	...	...	87.5
494	263	TR Property	300½	- 1½	4.5	-6.6
83	64⅜	Troy Inc&Gth	69⅛	- ½	2.0	-2.0
260	144	Utilico Ord	155	- 1	3.3	-32.2
227½	196½	Utilico Emerging Mkt	205	+ 1	3.3	-14.4
772	500	Vietnam Ent Inv	585	- 4	...	-9.9
252	199¾	Witan	218	- 1½	2.4	-6.1
3625	2820	Ww Health	3245	+ 35	0.7	-7.0



Construction & property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
236½	133	Alumasc♦	152	...	6.2	7.7
17⅛	10⅛	Aseana Props	11⅝	+ ⅜	...	-5.8
71¾	48⅝	Assura Grp‡	53¼	- ¼	5.4	10.6
2⅜	1⅜	Aukett Swanke♦	2⅜	...	...	-3.4
346	215½	Balfour Beatty	340¾	- ¾	1.3	16.1
760	323⅜	**Barratt Devs**	405	- 2	7.2	6.3
3363	1586½	Bellway‡	1925½	- 3	6.1	5.7
4903	3165	**Berkeley**	3827	- 16	0.2	9.9
1724	987	Big Yellow Group	1141	- 8	2.9	7.5
290	181½	Billington Hldgs♦	275	...	1.5	22.3
345	227	Boot (Henry)	235	...	2.3	12.5
556⅜	324¾	**Br Land**‡	391⅝	- 1⅜	3.8	53.6
160	120	Caledonian Tst♦	145	...	...	28.9
179¼	95½	Cap & Count Prop	102⅛	...	0.4	30.0
65	43¾	Cap & Regnl	58¾	+ 1¾	...	-0.5
2550	2050	Cardiff Prop	2420	...	0.7	26.3
38½	14	Carecapital♦	14	+ ¼	...	-1.6
170	106	Clarke T	124	+ 2½	3.5	8.9
231	131⅜	CLS Hldgs	150⅜	- ½	5.0	5.1
458⅛	191⅝	Countryside Prop	229¾	+ 14	...	16.7
37⅝	6⅛	Craven House♦	7	...	...	-0.1
4002	2756½	**CRH**	3275½	- 28	2.6	13.6
3528	1876	Derwent London	2322	- 2	3.2	10.3
4¼	3	Dolphin Capital♦	3¾	...	...	-2.6
36½	23	First Prop♦‡	24	- ½	1.8	...
52½	36½	Fletcher King♦	43½	...	...	...
46⅝	27¼	Foxtons Group	30	...	0.6	...
189⅞	145	Galliford Try	154¾	+ 1½	3.0	34.4
620	252½	Genuit Group	277	- 3	3.1	16.7
800	337	Gleeson (MJ)	346	+ 3	4.3	5.4
1255	630½	Grafton Gp Uts	790½	+ 4⅞	4.4	9.1
319⅛	205⅜	Grainger	255	+ 2	2.1	15.8
741	409⅛	Gr Portland‡	496½	+ 1½	2.5	-6.2
39⅞	17⅛	Hammerson	23⅜	+ ¼	1.7	-2.5
191	101	Harworth Gp	105	...	1.7	3.6
630	450	Heath (Samuel)♦	450	...	1.5	9.3
454	296½	Helical PLC‡	326	- 1	3.1	7.8
1065	875	Highcroft Invs	930	...	5.5	4.0
208⅛	148½	Ibstock	149	+ ¾	2.7	19.3
314	181	James Halstead♦	189½	- 3½	4.0	20.1
1000	591	Keller	758	- 1	4.7	8.8
9327⅛	3912⅛	Kingspan Group	4403½	- 46⅝	0.7	17.3
813⅛	485¼	**Land Sec**‡	616¾	- 2⅛	5.5	...
105	71½	Life Science Reit	72⅝	- ½	...	...
25	12	Lon & Assoc	20	...	...	-2.7
285⅛	161¾	London Metric Prop‡	171	- 3	5.1	3.6
59	37	Macau Prop Op	48⅞	...	...	-6.3
713¾	225⅜	Marshalls	268	+ 3⅜	3.3	9.7
138	74	Michelmersh♦‡	92	- ½	3.9	14.6
2530	1392	Morgan Sindall	1502	+ 2	4.6	7.3
14650	11100	Mountview	11800	- 200	3.6	14.7
100	68¼	NewRiver REIT‡	76	- 1½	3.9	-2.6
297	195	Palace Capital‡	213	- 1	5.1	10.1
310	255	Panther Securities♦	295	...	4.0	2.6
2883	1138½	**Persimmon**	1231	- 8½	19.0	5.0
8	2⅜	Pires Investments♦	2⅜	...	...	-5.2
175	45	Plaza Cent	45	...	...	-0.1
152⅜	98⅝	Primary Hlth	108⅝	- ⅞	5.7	11.0
40½	29½	Real Estate Invs♦	29½	...	12.7	3.8
709	372½	Redrow	461⅛	- 2¾	5.3	5.7
1418	794	Safestore	926½	- 12½	2.1	5.2
1450	763½	Savills	825	+ 7	2.7	8.2
7¼	5¾	Secure Property♦	5¾	...	...	15.2
1436½	694	**Segro**	756⅛	- 10	2.9	2.2
48	27¾	SIG	29½	- ¼	...	...
98½	37⅜	SigmaRoc♦	55¾	+ 1⅛	...	...
142¾	66½	Sirius Real Estate‡	73¼	...	4.4	5.7
161½	146½	Smart (J)‡	160½	...	2.0	4.3
50	26	Steppe Cement♦	44½	+ ½	8.5	10.2
178	85	**Taylor Wimpey**	102¼	- ⅜	8.0	6.7
178½	129	Town Centre‡	153	+ 2	2.2	6.0
1635	738	Travis Perkins	895½	- 5	1.3	8.7
249	125⅝	Tritax Big Box Reit	137	- 1	4.7	2.4
118	58⅝	Tritax Eurobox‡	60⅛	- ⅜	...	...
413½	184½	Tyman	229	- 5	3.4	9.0
1207	791½	**UNITE GRP**	899	- 7	2.1	10.4
1225	519½	Vistry Group	618½	- 3½	6.4	5.4
176¾	104⅛	Warehouse REIT‡	104⅛	- ⅜	5.9	2.4
887	343⅜	Workspace Grp	435⅛	+ 4½	4.0	-6.4
755	645	Wynnstay Props♦	675	...	3.1	4.8

Consumer goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
6¾	3⅜	Agriterra♦	3⅜	...	...	-0.4
30½	25½	Airea♦	28	...	...	10.3
952	682	Anglo-Eastern	770	- 10	...	7.0
355	207½	Animalcare♦	227½	+ 2½	1.7	...
2131	1237	**AB Foods**‡	1568½	- 7½	0.4	25.9
133½	79	Bakkavor Group	96	- 1½	6.9	10.0
588	432	Barr (AG)	514	- 2	...	18.2
5⅝	2¼	Bidstack Group♦	2⅞	...	...	-2.4
122	25½	Brand Architekts♦	25½	...	...	-1.1
3628	2689½	**Brit Amer Tob**‡	3319½	- 34	6.4	11.2
949½	707½	Britvic‡	784½	- 25	3.0	17.7
2177	1482	**Burberry Grp**‡	2018	- 10	2.1	17.3
243	143⅞	C&C Grp	178¼	+ 1⅝	...	...
9¾	2½	Capital Metals♦	2½	...	...	-0.6
160	92	Carr's Grp	116	...	4.3	14.3
640	363	Character Grp♦	431	+ 8	2.0	7.6
1797½	1070	Churchill China♦	1175	...	...	...
2687	1460½	**Coca Cola HBC**	1950½	- 13	2.7	15.5
880	595	Colefax♦	610	- 20	...	10.8
3820	2586	Cranswick‡	3062	- 2	2.2	16.1
311	164	Devro‡	308½	+ ½	2.9	16.7
4103½	3343	**Diageo**	3663	- 30	1.9	28.1
1⅞	⅝	Distil♦	¾	...	...	21.2
1085	784	Evans (M.P.)♦	810	- 4	3.4	6.9
101	66½	Finsbury Food♦	91	...	2.6	10.8
10090	1722	Games Workshop	8475	- 140	3.0	23.3
1146¼	846⅛	Glanbia	1024⅜	...	2.2	25.2
141	60¾	Greencore	64	...	...	12.8
459	231	Headlam	303	+ 4	2.5	13.0
1250	500	Hilton Food	547	...	4.1	11.4
57	25½	Hornby♦	28½	...	...	...
2185	1486	**Imperial Brands**‡	2090	+ 7	6.6	6.9
1⅞	1¼	J Lewis Hford♦	1⅜	...	...	8.4
10443	7397¼	Kerry Gp	7622¾	...	0.9	21.1
61	15½	McBride	20¾	+ 1¾	...	-3.7
335	200	Mulberry Group♦	230	...	...	9.5
1540	1055	Nichols♦	1100	- 10	1.6	...
327	165	Norcros‡	178	- 7	4.6	5.6
383¼	296⅝	Origin Ents♦	383¼	...	2.4	12.1
68	50	Pittards♦‡	61½	...	0.8	29.0
710	302½	Portmeirion♦	302½	...	4.3	12.8
1	⅝	Provexis♦	¾	...	...	0.3
215½	182¾	PZ Cussons	211½	- 1	2.8	24.3
200½	105	REA	105	+ 2½	...	-8.2
3⅛	1	Real Gd Fd♦	1½	...	...	0.1
600	235	Tandem♦	262½	...	3.4	3.7
1315	507	Treatt	600	- 16	1.0	24.0
4½	1¾	Ukrproduct Gp♦	3¼	...	...	-2.2
66⅞	7¾	Unbound Group♦	7¾	...	...	...
4876½	4010	Unilever (NV)	4786½	- 28½	2.9	24.5
4213	3328	**Unilever**	4213	- 12	3.4	21.6
1210	317	Victoria♦	470	+ 9	...	...

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
...	...	Ass Br Eng#	15	...	...	-3.5
1381	739	Avon Rubber	1074	+ 14	2.7	...
367½	268½	Babcock	289	- 2¾	...	-1.7
861½	528¾	**BAE Sys**	861½	+ 1⅛	2.8	15.7
2250	1600	Braime A N/V♦	2100	+ 50	0.5	23.6
2300	1480	Braime Group♦	1750	+ 50	0.6	19.7
602½	500	Caffyns‡	500	...	...	7.2
6½	3	Cap XX Ld♦	3⅝	...	...	-7.9
374	279	Castings‡	354	...	4.3	17.1
7⅞	3⅞	Chamberlin♦	3⅞	...	...	-0.2
54	14	Checkit♦	19	...	...	-2.3
560	391	Cohort♦	500	+ 11	2.2	44.4
398	160½	Crestchic Plc♦	397	+ 1	...	...
1760	1020⅜	Dewhurst♦	1080	+ 15	1.2	12.4
371	232⅞	Dialight	310	+ 1½	...	...
1761½	910⅝	Electrolux 'B'	1100⅞	- 7⅝	5.9	8.3
175	85½	Feedback♦	96	+ 4	...	...
1275	426	Gooch Hsego♦	526	- 4	0.8	38.9
3570	2400	Goodwin	3235	- 65	3.1	17.8
3216	1876½	**Halma**‡	1994½	- 53½	0.8	28.8
1826	893	Hill & Smith‡	1188	- 14	2.4	27.9
125	77½	Holders Tech♦	78½	...	0.9	4.7
3¼	¾	Image Scan♦	1⅜	+ ¼	...	8.6
1784	1071	IMI	1304	- 22	1.7	17.8
...	...	Inspirit Energy♦	...	...	...	...
8740	6090	Judges Scientific♦	8300	- 180	0.6	41.8
81	60	LPA♦	76½	...	...	...
798¾	732¾	Meggitt	798¾	+ ⅛	...	...
173½	95½	**Melrose**	130⅛	- 1¼	1.2	...
368	217	Morgan Advanced	309½	+ 4	2.1	13.0
560	227½	Mpac♦	285	+ 2½	...	7.4
475	213	MS Intl♦‡	470	- 6	0.7	67.1
2665	1720	Oxford Inst‡	2140	- 35	0.7	29.2
2946¼	1057⅝	Philips El nv	1191¾	+ 35⅞	5.9	21.1
36½	12¾	PipeHawk♦	14½	+ 1¼	...	30.8
101½	23⅛	Pressure Tech♦	36½	+ ½	...	-3.0
5000	3342	Renishaw	3662	- 68	1.8	20.8
31⅜	20	Renold♦	21¾	+ ⅜	...	7.7
128½	66⅛	**Rolls-Royce**	91	...	...	61.9
2⅜	1⅛	Ross Gp	1¼	...	...	-3.2
373⅜	229½	Rotork	311⅜	- 2½	2.7	33.8
210	137½	SDI Group♦	149	- 2½	...	24.5
152	111	Senior	127	+ ⅜	...	22.1
74⅜	48	Severfield	60	- 2	4.8	10.7
16¼	8⅝	Six Hundred♦	8⅝	- 3⅛	...	50.4
1837¾	1151	SKF B	1252⅝	- 25⅜	4.5	9.2
270	175	Slingsby (HC)♦	270	...	...	4.4
1629	1364	**Smiths**	1593	- 16	2.3	25.3
1435	946¾	Solid State♦	1400	...	1.1	33.7
598	360	Somero Enter♦	365	+ 2½	4.4	8.1
3704	2458	Spectris	3029	- 69	2.2	9.9
16255	9130	**Spirax-Sarco**	10545	- 205	1.1	33.2
57½	37	Surface Trsfms♦	39½	...	...	...
3½	1½	Tanfield♦	3¼	...	...	-9.0
495	345	Thorpe FW♦	402½	- 7½	1.4	28.0
4¾	⅝	TP Group♦	2⅛	...	...	-3.3
95½	48½	Transense Tech♦	87½	...	...	64.3
3500	2824	Ultra Electrncs	3500	+ 6	1.6	37.4
491	284½	Vesuvius	396⅛	+ 5½	5.1	10.5
1530	1040	Videndum	1040	- 10	1.4	19.0
346½	225	Volex♦	249	- 1½	1.3	13.5
1897	1328½	**Weir**	1668½	- 38½	0.6	28.1
5250	1464	XP Power‡	1930	- 12	4.7	10.3
182½	111¼	Zytronic♦	130	- 5	...	43.3

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1750	1049	Abcam♦	1226	+ 123	...	...
338	234½	AdvancedMedical♦	262½	+ 3½	0.6	41.2
33½	11⅜	Allergy Therap♦	11⅜	...	...	...
156	45¼	Angle♦	45¼	- ¾	...	-6.1
640	370	Anpario♦	500	...	1.6	26.3
11440	8282	**AstraZeneca**	11306	+ 62	1.8	...
46	29	Circassia Group♦	34	...	...	34.0
245¾	166¾	**Convatec**	232⅛	+ ¾	1.7	54.2
90½	28½	Creighton	28½	...	4.0	5.4
5325	2520	Dechra Pharma	2650	+ 16	1.5	39.5
1⅜	¾	Deltex Medical♦	⅞	+ ⅛	...	-5.4
44¼	15⅜	e-Therapeutics♦	17¼	...	...	...
230	82½	Eco Animal Hlth♦	100	+ 2	1.0	12.1
78¾	30	EKF Diagnostics♦	50½	+ 4⅜	1.9	14.3
52	24⅝	Futura Medical♦	51	- 1⅞	...	...
5010	2234	Genus	2992	+ 4	1.0	53.2
1828½	1296	**GSK**‡	1454¾	+ 1½	5.5	16.8
⅞	⅜	Gunsynd♦	⅜	...	...	4.1
323⅞	246⅛	**Haleon**	323⅞	+ 3⅛	...	...
2228	1190½	Hikma Pharms	1574	+ 15	2.4	11.8
539	134½	Hutchmed China♦	246½	- 3½	...	...
...	...	Immunodiag Sys♦	378	...	0.5	...
8	1⅞	ImmuPharma♦	1⅞	+ ¼	...	-0.5
7025	1060	Indivior	1824	- 3	...	...
126½	54½	Inspiration Health♦‡	60	+ 1	1.0	9.2
60⅛	25½	IXICO♦	26	...	...	8.3

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
501½	298	Mediclinic Int	498	+⅛	...	31.1
5¼	1½	N4 Pharma♦	1¾	...	...	-2.1
88.42	72.84	Novartis	CHF 84.54	-0.17	3.2	9.6
27⅝	2¼	Omega Diags♦	3¾	...	...	-1.4
22½	4¾	Ovoca Bio♦	4¾	...	...	-1.3
1230	297	Oxford Biomedica	430½	+14½	...	19.3
6¾	2	Physiomics♦	2⅝	...	...	...
5⅛	3¼	Proteome Scies♦	3⅝	-⅛	...	...
6808	5450	**Reckitt Benck**	5698	-26	3.0	...
81	31⅜	RUA Life Sciences♦	47	+1	...	-4.5
295	72½	Sareum Hldgs♦	80	-2½	...	...
1338½	984½	**Smith & Neph**	1097½	+3½	2.4	24.9
254½	206	Spire Hcare	225	-½	...	...
210⅜	14½	Synairgen♦	14½	-1	...	-0.6
½	¼	Tissue Regenix♦	½	...	...	-7.0
47½	27¾	Totally♦	34¾	...	1.4	55.1
495	292	Tristel♦‡	420	+2½	1.5	86.6
42	10½	ValiRx♦	12¾	+¼	...	...

Industrials

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
181	54⅜	Accsys Tech♦	62¼	...	...	...
5987⅝	3386½	BASF	4025⅞	-71¾	6.8	7.9
5904	3953½	Bayer DM50	4278⅜	-40½	3.9	49.9
335	46½	Biome Tech♦	76	...	...	-2.5
4½	1⅞	Byotrol♦	2¼	...	...	...
7¼	6¼	Camb Gbl Timber♦	6¾	...	...	-9.0
81⅜	50⅞	Coats Grp	72¾	+1¼	1.9	16.2
10245	5908	**Croda**	6618	-32	1.4	28.8
1475	825	Cropper (James)♦‡	885	...	...	26.9
146½	87⅝	Elementis	118¾	-⅝	...	...
36	13½	Hardide♦	13½	-¼	...	-2.6
2360	1721	Johnson Math‡	2095	-44	3.3	26.4
1950½	1309	**Mondi**	1415½	-9½	3.6	10.8
87½	75	Robinson♦	80	...	6.8	...
401¾	241¾	**Smith (DS)**‡	319	-½	3.7	18.1
727¼	427⅞	Swire Pacific	727¼	+20¾	2.1	...
26½	10¼	Symph Environ♦	10¼	-½	...	...
410½	88	Synthomer	136¾	-1⅞	12.6	2.8
2558¼	1860⅛	Takeda Pharm	2558¼	+4⅜	4.5	14.3
7⅞	4⅛	Velocys♦	4¾	...	...	-6.0
2478	1576	Victrex	1576	-12	3.7	18.7
651	500	Wynnstay Group♦	608	...	2.4	13.9
430	233	Zotefoams	346	+11	1.8	20.8

Leisure

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
307⅛	82¾	888 Hldgs	82¾	-1⅞	13.2	6.1
850	542	Accesso Tech♦	780	...	...	20.5
612	370	Best of the Best♦	410	+5	1.2	4.5
1588⅛	501⅜	Carnival	571⅛	-39¾	...	-0.9
140	98½	Celtic♦	111½	...	...	11.0
44⅜	1⅞	Cineworld	3⅞	...	...	-0.1
465⅛	215⅛	Domino's Pizza	287¾	-1⅛	4.2	14.6
1728	1075½	**Entain**	1308	-22½	...	29.2
12175	7614	**Flutter Ent**	11545	-105	...	...
36⅜	22	Gaming Realms♦	24⅞	-⅞	...	...
290	290	Heavitree♦	290	...	...	17.4
200	140	Heavitree A♦	140	...	...	8.4
145	145	Hermes Pacific♦	145	...	...	...
5338	4193	**Intercont Htls**	4756	-45	...	44.5
1¼	⅞	Minoan Gp♦	1	...	...	-7.2
266¾	102	Mitch & Butlers	135	-3½	...	...
312	92½	On The Beach	152½	+1½	...	-8.0
1600	1180	PPHE Hotels	1190	+10	...	-9.6
168	52⅜	Rank Grp	77¼	-1¾	...	10.4
106⅜	27⅝	Restaurant Gp	29⅞	+⅜	...	-5.6
35½	21½	Rotala♦	33½	...	...	...
40	15½	Sportech♦	19	...	...	...
303⅛	184¾	SSP Group	228¾	...	...	-4.4
6¼	3¼	Tasty♦	3¾	...	...	5.0
305	50	Tintra♦	215	+5	...	-3.8
294⅛	105⅜	TUI	135	-3¼	...	-1.4
3¾	1⅛	Webis Holdings♦	1⅛	...	...	...
973	389¾	Wetherspoon JD	429½	-12	...	-4.0
3243	2285	**Whitbread**	2632	-27	...	...
1660	870	Young & Co - A♦	1024	-52	...	...
890	564	Young & Co - N/V♦	619	-21	...	...

Media

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
½	⅛	7digital Gp♦	⅜	...	...	-3.1
87½	52½	Aeorema Comms♦‡	80	...	...	22.1
35	20½	Altitude Group♦	32	...	...	...
98	72	Arcontech Grp♦	79	...	3.4	10.9
413⅜	176⅛	Ascential	196⅞	-½	...	...
740	486⅛	**Auto Trader**	521¾	-3	0.9	25.7
492	328	Bloomsbury Pub	445	-5	1.9	18.3
10⅜	3¼	Bonhill Group♦	8	...	...	...
120	47½	Catalyst Media♦	119½	...	...	...
⅝	⅛	Catenae♦	⅛	...	...	-0.3
1068	269	Daily Mail‡	270	-2½	8.9	10.3
195	100	DCD Media♦#	100	-30	...	5.0
71½	43	Ebiquity♦	48	+3	...	...
1466	829	Euromoney In Inv	1460	+2	0.7	...
3830	1145	Future	1229	-35	0.1	21.1
1425	930	GlobalData♦	1175	...	1.5	58.1
115	46¾	Hyve Group	69¾	+⅜	...	...
275	46½	IG Design Grp♦	123	-3½	7.0	18.0
626½	475⅜	**Informa**	613½	-4¾	...	...
123⅝	55⅛	ITV	73⅜	+⅛	...	7.8
11½	7¼	Jaywing♦	8⅛	...	...	...
12¼	2½	Live Company Gp♦	2⅞	-⅛	...	-0.6
...	...	Mediazest♦	...	...	...	-5.5
47½	34	Merit Grp♦	35	...	...	...
74	30	Mirada♦	32½	+2½	...	-1.4
70	42	Mission Group♦	44	...	5.3	7.4
225½	167	Moneysupermarket	190½	+¾	6.1	19.4
1938	1223½	News Corp A	1471⅜	-2⅜	1.0	24.0
1961	1249¾	News Corp B	1488⅞	-4⅞	0.9	24.3
1458	755	Next 15 Comms♦	996	-28	0.7	...
995⅛	588½	**Pearson**	945½	+7⅛	2.0	45.2
107	61	Photo-Me	107	+5	...	18.6
4⅛	2	Primorus Inv♦	2⅞	...	...	5.2
175½	108½	Quarto	119½	...	...	6.6
282½	67	Reach	91½	-2⅝	7.6	...
2⅛	¾	REACT Grp♦	1	...	...	15.0
2449	2071	**Relx**	2308	-3	2.0	30.4
800⅜	445⅜	**Rightmove**	516¾	-10	0.8	29.2
155	81½	SpaceandPeople♦	82½	...	...	...
360	247	STV Group	275	+7	3.5	6.7
467	137½	System1 Group♦	145	...	...	6.9
3601⅛	2305½	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2521¾	+⅜	1.3	13.8
3277⅞	2174⅝	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2361¼	+1¼	1.4	12.9
...	...	Vela Tech♦	...	...	...	6.3
318	205	Wilmington	302	-8	1.9	19.2
1224	725¾	**WPP**	817⅜	-3⅜	3.2	15.5
123½	71	Zinc Media♦	87½	...	...	-5.5

Natural resources

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1	⅜	ADM Energy♦	⅝	...	...	...
5¼	...	Advance Energy♦#	⅛	...	...	-0.1
49⅝	17¾	AFC Energy♦	19⅝	+½	...	...
...	...	Afentra PLC	...	...	...	...
¼	...	Alba Mineral Res♦	...	...	...	-2.1
1	⅜	Alien Metals♦	½	...	...	...
117⅛	66¾	Alumina	86	-¾	5.3	17.9
1¼	½	Aminex	1	...	...	-6.3
3⅞	⅝	Amur Mins Corp♦	1⅛	...	...	...
1184898⅝	7024⅛	Anglo Amer Plat	7024⅛	-144½	6.9	5.0
4170½	2547½	**Ang Am**	3204	-45½	5.5	6.3
120½	64	Anglo Asian Mng♦	93	-2	6.2	8.0
1781½	991½	**Antofagasta**	1536½	-23	3.4	15.9
5¼	2¼	Arc Minerals♦	3	...	...	2.2
4¾	2½	Ariana Res♦	2⅞	...	...	3.9
¾	⅜	Arkle Resources♦	⅝	...	...	-2.1
5⅜	1⅜	Armadale Cap♦	1⅝	...	...	...
2⅞	⅞	Asiamet Rsrcs♦	1⅛	...	...	...
448	188	Atalaya Mine♦	305	-9	9.6	3.8
¼	...	Baron Oil♦	⅛	...	...	...
17½	3¾	Beowulf Mining♦	3¾	...	...	...
⅛	...	Bezant Res♦	...	...	...	-1.8
3019	2034	BHP Group	2537½	-47½	...	11.1
6⅞	½	Border & Sthn Pet♦	2⅛	-⅛	...	...
48⅞	14¼	Bougainville	21⅝	+2½	...	...
4¾	1⅞	BowLeven♦	1⅞	...	...	-2.4
501¾	323¼	**BP**	477⅞	-2	3.2	17.3
30⅜	8¾	Cadence Min♦	10½	+1⅜	...	1.0
3½	1⅝	Cadogan Petrol	2⅛	...	...	30.5
1250	825	Caledonia Mining♦	964	+9	3.5	9.4
253¾	181⅝	Capricorn Energy	251	+1½	...	1.9
5¼	2¼	Caspian Sunrise♦‡	4	...	...	...
112¼	74⅜	Centamin	112¼	...	4.6	17.4
284	200½	Cent Asia Metals♦	245½	-4	6.5	7.1
20	9⅜	Chaarat Gold♦#	10⅞	...	...	...
23⅞	7	Chariot Oil & Gas♦	15	-¼	...	...
10⅛	2¾	China Nonferr Gold♦	2¾	...	...	...
⅝	...	Clontarf Energy♦	...	...	...	-1.3
35¾	15¾	Condor Gld♦	15¾	+⅛	...	-9.3
2	⅛	Corcel♦	¼	...	...	-0.2
7597⅜	58¼	DRD Gold	58¼	-¾	6.5	6.8
1⅝	½	ECR Minerals♦	⅞	...	...	-5.4
25½	7¾	Edenville Energy♦	7¾	...	...	-0.5
11¾	⅝	Empyrean Energy♦	⅝	...	...	-4.9
2090	1461	**Endeavour Mining**	1754	-5	2.7	26.1
36½	17⅜	EnQuest	21⅜	-⅛	...	1.3
28½	4⅛	Eurasia Mining♦	4⅛	...	...	...
3½	⅞	Europa Oil&Gas♦	1	...	...	9.5
323	97½	Ferrexpo	165⅝	...	8.6	1.2
914¾	622⅜	**Fresnillo**	871	-10¾	2.8	20.6
...	...	G3 Exploration#	28	...	...	-2.6
41½	23½	Galantas Gold♦	32	...	...	-5.4
8⅛	3¼	GCM Resources♦	4¾	...	...	-4.0
72⅞	28½	Gem Diamonds	31⅞	...	5.7	3.3
34¼	14¾	Getech♦	15¼	-½	...	-3.6
563½	360¾	**Glencore**	557	-3¾	1.5	20.3
⅞	¼	Global Petrol♦	¼	...	...	-4.2
119386⅛	878⅞	Gold Fields	878⅞	-10½	2.9	13.5
12½	6⅝	Goldplat♦	10¼	-⅜	...	7.7
11⅝	3⅞	Goldstone Res♦	3⅞	...	...	...
16⅞	7¼	Greatld Gld♦	7⅞	...	...	...
120½	70	Griffin Mining♦	74½	-3	...	8.2
310	168⅛	Gulf Keystone	199½	...	4.2	12.5
530	298½	Harbour Energy	310⅝	-6½	...	36.2
25⅞	5⅝	Harland & Wolff Gp♦	20⅞	-⅝	...	1.6
147⅛	51½	Hochschild	66½	+¼	4.7	6.4
173	85	Horizonte Minrls♦	138½	...	...	...
18¼	5	Hummingbird Res♦	6¼	...	...	-7.1
356½	154⅛	Hunting PLC	331½	+8½	1.7	-8.4
106½	12¾	IGas Energy♦	17⅞	+1¼	...	-0.9
½	...	Independ Res♦	...	...	...	-0.1
317	228	Indus Gas♦	264	...	...	27.3
1¼	¼	Ironveld♦	¼	...	...	-4.0
406⅛	79⅞	ITM Power♦	86⅝	-5½	...	...
17½	10⅛	Jubilee Metals♦	10⅛	...	...	8.4
3¾	1¾	Karel Diamd Res♦	2⅛	...	...	-8.9
1¼	½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	⅝	...	...	-2.7
526	380½	Kenmare Res	423	+3	2.6	4.9
38⅜	5¾	Lamprell#	8⅞	...	...	-0.7
30¾	11⅞	Landore Res♦	18¼	+½	...	-4.1
⅝	⅜	Lansdowne O&G♦	⅜	...	...	...
21	14	Leeds Group♦	14	...	...	-2.2
6⅜	1⅞	Lexington Gold♦	5½	...	...	...
20½	2¼	MC Mining♦	13¼	...	...	-2.7
1⅝	¾	Metals Explorn♦	1⅛	...	...	2.0
⅝	⅛	Nostra Terra♦	¼	...	...	-1.5
8⅛	2	Nostrum O&G	2⅞	+¼	...	...
...	...	Oil Search	218⅞	-5⅜	0.1	60.3
¼	⅛	Oilex♦#	⅛	...	...	-3.7
⅜	...	Oriole Resources♦	⅛	...	...	-1.6
1	½	Ormonde Mining♦	⅝	+⅛	...	-2.6
17⅛	6⅜	Orosur Mining♦	7	-¼	...	...
24	16	Pan African Res♦	16⅝	-½	5.0	5.4
149½	69½	Pantheon Res♦	85¾	+⅞	...	...
79	36	Parkmead Grp♦	59	+1⅛	...	-5.0
⅝	⅜	Pathfinder Mins♦	½	...	...	-4.3
134	68¾	Petra Diamonds	98½	+3½	...	3.2
4	1¼	Petrel Resources♦	1⅜	...	...	-7.1
4¾	1⅝	Petro Matad♦	3⅜	...	...	...
157⅞	72⅞	Petrofac	72⅞	+1¼	...	-1.8
4⅜	¼	Petroneft Res♦	¼	...	...	-0.9
21¼	⅞	Petropavlovsk#	1⅛	-⅛	...	1.6
7½	3½	Phoenix Global♦	6½	+¼	...	-1.6
10	1¾	Plexus Holdings♦	1¾	...	...	-0.4
1311½	92	Polymetal Intl	242¼	-1⅝	40.2	...
772	499	Porvair	660	+20	0.7	25.3
13	3¼	Prospex Energy♦	13	...	...	...
22	8½	Proton Motor Power S♦	12½	-¾	...	-2.2
4	1¾	Providence Res♦	3¼	...	...	29.0
2¾	1	Quadrise Fuels Intl♦	2	+⅛	...	-7.7
40½	3½	Rambler Met&Min♦#	5⅜	+¼	...	0.1
⅜	...	Reabold Resources♦	⅛	...	...	-3.7
⅝	¼	Red Rock Res♦	¼	...	...	-1.7
7036½	4831⅛	Rio Tinto Ltd	6375⅛	-16⅝	7.8	6.6
6225	4486	**Rio Tinto**	5739	-43	8.7	6.0
41⅛	31	San Leon Energy♦	31	-⅞	...	11.6
⅞	⅛	Scirocco Energy♦	⅛	...	...	...
60½	22½	Serabi Gold♦	29	...	...	3.9
450	229½	Serica Energy♦	259	-5½	1.3	...
12½	6¾	Shanta Gold♦	9½	+¼	1.0	6.0
2526½	1573½	**Shell**	2352½	-2	2.5	12.4
2⅞	⅞	Sound Energy♦	⅞	...	...	5.6
⅛	...	Sunrise Resources♦	...	...	...	...
¼	...	Tertiary Minerals♦	...	...	...	-3.1
⅞	¼	Thor Mining♦	¼	...	...	-2.0
5208¾	3755¼	Total Eng SE	5186⅞	+232⅝	4.3	11.8
⅜	⅛	Tower Resources♦	⅛	...	...	-3.2
62⅛	36¼	Tullow Oil	38	...	...	3.8
⅛	...	UK Oil & Gas♦	...	...	...	-2.0
460	135	URU Metals♦	150	-25	...	4.8
2¼	⅛	Vast Res♦	⅛	...	...	...
5½	3⅛	Victoria Oil&Gas♦#	3¾	...	...	-1.8
5	2⅛	W Resources♦#	2⅝	...	...	-0.3
8⅛	2⅛	Westmount Engy♦	2⅞	...	...	-0.6
251⅝	104½	Wood Grp (J)	135⅜	+1⅝	...	-5.5
8	1⅝	Woodbois♦	1⅝	...	...	6.2
7	1¾	Xtract Resources♦	1¾	...	...	-3.3
7⅝	4	Zephyr Energy♦	6¼	+¼	...	-7.9

Professional & support services

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
4350	2240	4imprint Grp	4350	-40	0.2	73.4
555	457	Andrews Sykes♦	470	...	4.9	15.0
6200	3359	**Ashtead**	4725	-72	0.9	23.0
36	1¾	Asimilar Group♦	1¾	...	...	...
165	58	AssetCo♦‡	68½	...	...	0.4
50½	36	Avisen♦	49	...	...	...
148	100	Begbies Traynor♦	143	+2	2.1	...
245	155	Blancco Tech♦	176½	...	...	63.2
3163	2575	**Bunzl**‡	2777	-16	1.9	21.0
38¼	20⅛	Capita	24¼	-½	...	1.8
51½	39½	CEPS♦	39½	...	...	-8.9
130	89	Christie Group♦	117½	...	...	50.0
1969½	1528½	**Compass**	1934	+13½	0.7	47.0
370	97	CPPGroup♦	107½	...	27.9	...
92	53½	Croma Security♦	57	...	3.5	8.1
6486	4084	**DCC**	4084	-48	3.9	13.5
160¾	73	De La Rue	79¼	+¼	...	10.4
3400	2158	Diploma	2808	-34	1.5	50.2
1060	597	Discoverie‡	727	-4	1.4	59.5
50½	23½	Driver Group♦	24	+½	6.2	11.4
357	175⅛	Essentra	241½	+2	2.1	27.1
3667	2285	**Experian**	2815	-19	1.2	36.1
13305	8680	Ferguson‡	10250	-95	1.7	15.1
250	210	FIH Group♦‡	250	...	...	...
150½	53½	Gattaca♦	71	-½	2.1	...
6⅛	4⅛	Grafenia♦	5¾	...	...	-4.2
610	317	Hargeaves Serv♦	383	-17	1.8	4.0
1196	608½	**Homeserve**	1196	-2	2.1	...
655	413	Impellam Grp♦	625	+30	...	34.1
39¼	4	Ince G♦	6	...	...	3.4
5782	3619	**Intertek**	3965	-5	2.6	22.2
302	115⅜	IWG	156¼	-1⅞	...	-5.9
162	77	Johnson Srvce♦	95⅞	+⅞	...	59.9
137½	99	Journeo♦	126½	+8	...	28.3
111	56½	Kier Gp	58⅝	-½	...	5.7
1400	1080	Latham (J)♦	1250	...	1.7	6.8
1085	695	Lok'n Store♦‡	950	+5	1.5	28.8
3850	2300	Lon Security♦	2850	+380	2.8	15.7
440	220	LSL Prop Services	257	+3	...	7.1
135¼	86	Macfarlane	106	+2	2.5	12.3
385	185	Maintel Hldgs♦	190	...	...	5.8
3300	8¼	Malvern Intl♦	12	...	...	...
224	182	Mears Group	205	-2	1.2	17.8
608	270	Menzies (John)	607	-1	...	48.0
79¾	46⅜	Mitie Gp‡	77⅞	+1¾	...	38.9
13¾	3¾	MobilityOne♦	6¾	-¾	...	5.0
41½	25	Newmark Sec♦	33	...	...	-8.2
8	3¾	Norm Broadbent♦	3¾	...	...	-7.0
66½	44	Northern Bear♦	44	...	...	4.4
286	193	NWF Grp♦	266	+5	2.7	...
663	362⅛	PageGroup	463¾	-2⅛	1.0	12.5
73	47½	PCI-PAL♦	52½	...	...	...
13	8¼	Petards♦	9¾	...	...	17.7
26½	16½	PHSC♦‡	16½	...	6.0	30.0
4½	⅞	PowerHouse Egy♦	⅞	...	...	-1.7
94	61	Record‡	94	+1⅛	2.4	25.8
440½	283½	Redde Northgate‡	416	-1½	3.7	10.4
838	555	Renew Hldgs♦	710	-7	1.8	17.5
851	489	Renewi	587	-17	...	12.4
584¾	444½	**Rentokil Itl**	514⅛	-3⅛	1.4	36.4
494	315	Restore♦	330	...	0.7	39.2
485	331½	Ricardo	475	-7	1.4	42.4
862	440	Robert Walters	528	+10	3.1	12.0
20	11½	Roebuck Food Grp♦	13	...	...	1.9
239	92	RPS Group	221	+1	0.1	...
1241	812	**RS Group**‡	906½	-14½	2.8	23.0
43½	17	RTC Group♦	17	-½	...	...
654	264⅜	RWS Hldgs♦	369½	+3⅛	2.5	33.9
457	350	Science Group♦	395	...	1.0	18.2
188¼	121⅛	Serco Gp	156⅝	+⅛	1.4	6.4
46	27½	Smiths News	46	+1	1.0	4.4
4168	2452	**Smurfit Kappa**	3056	-33	3.2	13.9
64⅜	36¼	Staffline Gp♦	39⅜	...	...	30.3
491	317½	SThree	400	+2	2.0	12.9
137½	90	Synectics♦	110	...	...	...
34½	21⅝	Thruvision Group♦	22	...	...	-8.0
106	39¼	Tribal♦	45½	-1¼	2.6	14.2
102½	49	Vianet♦	66	...	...	...
980	660	Vp‡	680	-20	3.6	16.7
3½	1	Westminster♦	1¾	...	...	-2.1

Retailing

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
110½	37⅞	AO World	52	-1⅝	...	...
635¾	295½	**B&M European**	412	-3½	4.2	9.5
44	20¼	Brown (N)♦	25⅜	+¼	...	7.4
79¼	40⅜	Card Factory	79¼	-⅛	...	...
2315	1549	CVS Group♦	1963	-51	0.3	54.9
265	104¾	DFS Furn‡	146¾	-3½	5.1	7.8
1434	670½	Dunelm	957	-10	3.6	12.9
949½	562½	**Frasers Group**	733½	-9½	...	32.6
3416	1673	Greggs	2342	-14	0.6	20.4
364	124⅝	Halfords‡	197	-½	2.5	6.5
942⅛	480⅞	Howden Join	570¾	+3½	2.3	10.7
928	647	Inchcape	819	-1	1.6	27.6
6¾	1⅝	IQ-AI	1⅞	...	...	-5.4
219	89⅛	**JD Sports**‡	119¼	-⅞	0.2	14.4
356	203	**Kingfisher**	231½	-1⅞	5.2	5.8
101	61½	Lookers	76⅛	-⅛	...	4.9
256⅞	93⅛	Marks Spencer	120	-2¾	...	92.3
19¼	6	Mothercare♦	7¼	...	...	-4.5
675	75½	Naked Wines♦	119	-3	...	...
8150	4383	**Next**‡	5598	-60	...	10.6
1722	393	**Ocado Gp**	629⅛	-22⅜	...	...
28¾	17½	Pendragon	17½	-⅝	...	5.5
470½	257¾	Pets at Home‡	276¾	-2	2.8	11.3
320	72⅞	Saga	122⅞	+½	...	...
299	169⅞	**Sainsbury J**	220	-1⅝	4.8	18.5
1708½	1132½	Smith WH	1497½	+10½	...	...
32½	14¼	Sosandar♦	22	-½	...	...
2⅝	1¼	Stanley Gbbns♦	1½	...	...	-1.6
169½	103	Studio Retail#	115	-2½	...	2.4
156	69½	Ted Baker	109¾	...	...	...
303⅜	199⅛	**Tesco**	226	-¾	4.0	11.5
67¾	38	Topps Tiles‡	47½	-5	...	8.6

Technology

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
155	63	Access Intell♦	67½	+1	...	-9.3
160	81½	Aferian plc♦	100½	...	2.9	18.0
198	137	Alfa Financial	164	+3½	0.6	25.6
22½	8¼	Allied Minds	13¾	+3⅛	...	-1.2
589	290	Aptitude Software	350	+3	1.5	39.3
721	465	Avast	716½	-3½	1.6	28.5
3415	1924	**Aveva Gp**	3210	-3	1.2	...
206½	126½	Bango♦	189	...	...	...
84	21	BATM Adv Coms	25	+⅜	2.9	10.5
34	10¾	Berkeley Res	16	+¼	...	-6.8
30¾	11½	Blackbird♦	15¼	...	...	...
1¾	⅞	CloudCoCo Group♦	1	...	...	-2.5
2978	1810	Computacenter	1912	-11	2.8	11.8
96	65½	Concurrent Tech♦	75	-1	3.4	17.8
14½	9¼	Corero♦	9¼	...	...	...
2450	1340	Craneware♦	1840	-5	1.4	83.9
2⅞	1¾	Crimson Tide♦	2⅜	...	...	16.0
24¾	11¼	CyanConn Hldgs♦	13½	+¼	...	...
357½	221	D4t4 Solutions♦‡	241	...	1.1	28.5
⅞	...	DeepMatter Gp♦	...	...	...	-0.1
24	13	Dillistone Group♦	14½	...	...	-4.2
1¼	¼	EQTEC♦	¼	...	...	-3.3
1280	599	FDM Group	742	-21	5.8	25.7
16¾	9	Filtronic♦	13⅞	...	...	37.5
2450	1230	First Derivts♦	1314	-54	...	...
738½	313⅛	GB Group♦	322	-1	1.9	24.5
183	136	GreshamTech	173	...	0.4	...
186	29½	Ilika♦	32	-½	...	-9.0
132½	71½	Ingenta♦	112½	...	1.3	65.7
78½	38	Intercede♦	56	+4	...	19.3
200	112⅜	Iomart♦	119	-1	5.9	13.0
53	28⅛	IQE♦	49	-¾	...	...
179	115½	K3 Business Tch♦	129	...	...	-2.2
2308	1064	LG Electronics	1379⅞	+133	...	3.6
½	⅛	Location Sciences♦	⅛	...	...	-2.0
527	256¼	Micro Focus Intl	525	...	3.4	-5.5
80½	45	MTI Wireless♦	55	...	3.3	18.3
52⅜	17	Nanoco Gp	43½	+⅛	...	...
93½	52	Netcall♦‡	92	-2	0.4	...
67½	43½	Northamber♦‡	43½	...	2.3	...
45½	10¼	Online Blockchain♦	15	...	...	-7.8
118½	76½	Oxford Metrics♦	106½	+4	1.6	46.3
9	6	Parity♦	6¼	...	...	-9.0
40	29	Pennant Intl♦	31	...	...	...
745½	390¾	Playtech	504½	+½	...	5.3
394⅛	245	QinetiQ	365½	+2	3.0	28.5
206	20½	RM	50½	-¼	9.3	10.1
853¾	595½	**Sage Gp**	747⅜	-13⅜	2.3	28.6
11	5¼	Seeing Machines♦	6⅛	...	...	...
139	74	Shearwater Grp♦	102	...	...	63.2
85	31½	Smartspace S'ware♦	40	...	...	-4.1
1819	1084	Softcat	1185	-29	1.7	23.2
286⅛	215⅜	Spirent Comms	265⅛	-2⅜	1.7	24.7
54	24¾	SRT Marine♦	47½	...	...	...
927	474½	Tele. Ericsson	484⅛	-2½	3.7	8.8
90	70	Touchstar♦	85	-2½	...	...
1055	825	Tracsis♦	970	-10	...	...
24	12¼	Trakm8♦	12¼	...	...	...
165	85	Triad Grp‡	85	...	2.3	9.3
864	222½	Wandisco♦	864	-3	...	...
1140	560	Water Intel♦	660	...	...	36.3
273	144½	Xaar	182	-2	...	...
12¾	¼	Yourgene♦	¼	...	...	-0.2
190	96⅜	Zoo Digital♦	190	+7½	...	...

Telecoms

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
226	100½	AdEPT Technology♦	100½	+½	...	...
170⅞	107¾	**Airtel Africa**	111⅜	-1⅛	2.9	9.9
200⅞	112½	**BT Group**	114¼	+¾	...	11.1
121⅜	55½	Currys plc	56⅝	-⅜	...	2.6
1680	1012	Gamma Comms♦	1048	-22	1.1	18.9
175	100¼	Helios Towers	101	-2⅝	...	-9.1
4076	1103½	Just Eat T'away	1684⅛	-127⅛	...	-3.6
½	...	Mobile Streams♦	...	...	...	-1.5
2¼	⅝	Mobile Tornado♦	1⅞	...	...	...
2500	1322	Telecom Plus	2215	-30	2.5	56.7
139½	83⅝	**Vodafone Gp**‡	83⅝	-¾	9.2	...

Transport

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
340	220	Braemar Ship‡	297	-3½	1.6	9.8
727⅜	285	easyJet	337⅝	-7¾	...	-2.1
14⅜	4½	Esken Limited	5¼	...	...	-0.2
139½	88½	FirstGroup‡	100⅝	-⅞	...	23.9
510	251	Fisher (James)	381	+9	...	-6.9
178¼	93⅝	**Intl Cons Air**	128¼	-1¼	...	-2.8
526¾	183⅛	Int Distrib Serv	207¾	-3½	4.8	2.3
402½	262¼	Irish Cont Uts	370	-15½	...	...
1423	667¾	Jet2♦	999⅛	+4¾	...	-5.3
284⅛	127⅜	Natl Express	127⅜	-3	...	-7.5
1050	820	Ocean Wilson	890	-5	8.9	4.5
106⅛	75⅜	Stagecoach	104⅝	...	...	14.7
24½	19½	Sutton Harbour♦	22	...	...	...
424	282	Wincanton‡	337½	-1½	3.0	9.1
4867	1357½	Wizz Air Hldgs	2040	-26	...	-4.6

Utilities

High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
95¾	66½	**Centrica**	95⅛	-⅝	...	9.6
258	178	ContourGlobal	251	+½	5.1	28.3
831½	473⅜	Drax Group	686½	+11	2.5	50.8
627½	484	Jersey Electricity	510	...	3.3	9.6
1245½	858⅜	**Natl Grid**‡	997½	-2⅞	4.9	23.2
11½	5¾	OPG Power♦	5¾	...	...	3.7
1190	755	Pennon	882	-1½	3.7	63.9
⅝	⅜	Rurelec♦	½	...	...	-0.4
3211	2213	**Severn Trent**‡	2651	-17	3.8	...
1920	1428	**SSE**	1716	...	4.7	6.7
1176½	828⅛	**Utd Utilities**‡	990⅛	-27¾	4.3	90.8

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by Morningstar.

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Distinguished educationist and prison reformer
Baroness Linklater of Butterstone
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Albert Reichmann

Obsessively private Canadian property tycoon whose company led the development of Canary Wharf then went into administration

Albert Reichmann was the patriarch of the world's most successful commercial property developer when he looked to the wasteland of London's Docklands and decided to park his tanks.

The Canadian family company certainly had a fair wind. After an audacious swoop for eight skyscrapers in Manhattan in 1977, Olympia & York (O&Y) seemed invincible. With New York City sliding into bankruptcy, the price of $50 million in cash (and $300 million in mortgages) for the office towers was described as "the real estate deal of the century". Within five years the investment had increased tenfold.

By the end of the Eighties O&Y had overtaken the Rockefellers as the biggest property owners in Manhattan; Albert in particular was the antithesis of the brash property tycoon but one commentator said Donald Trump was "chopped liver" compared with him and his brother Paul. The Reichmanns were estimated to be worth $13 billion by Forbes magazine at the height of their wealth in 1991 and to be the fourth richest family in the world.

So when the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher wanted to find a company with the chutzpah and financial muscle to pull off perhaps the biggest property deal of them all in London's derelict Docklands, it was the Reichmanns who she phoned in 1987. Paul, described as the "deal junkie", was said to be seduced by her suggestion that they create a US-style "down town" area of London to rival the Square Mile, sweetened by tax breaks, new transport links and an exploding demand for space from the glut of new financial services players after the Big Bang that deregulated the City in 1986.

The Conservative government had created an enterprise zone in the Isle of Dogs in 1982 after containerisation from ports such as Felixstowe in the Seventies had effectively rendered London's docking operations unviable. Regeneration was slow. G Ware Travelstead, the original preferred developer, could not raise the required finance.

With a decade of healthy yields behind them, the Reichmanns raised the £3 billion needed for the development, using their North American property empire as security. Within a year the foundations of the centrepiece of Canary Wharf — the 240m-high, 50-storey One Canada Square (then Britain's tallest building) — were in the ground. Thatcher praised the Reichmann brothers for their "faith in Britain".

By the time the tower was completed in 1991, London's office market had collapsed and the country was in recession. The 12 buildings Olympia & York had completed achieved an occupancy of just 55 per cent. Docklands Light Railway was still perceived as unreliable and the much-vaunted Jubilee Line extension, which included a Tube stop at Canary Wharf, would not be completed until 1999, three years late.

The Reichmanns' $20 billion debt was highly leveraged — not helped by unsuccessful corporate acquisitions they made in Canada, which plummeted in value after a stock market crash. Creditors, including most of the big banks, came calling. O&Y entered administration in 1992. Attempts to restructure the debt failed. Most of the Reichmanns' wealth was wiped out. A consortium of banks, led by Lloyds, bought the Canary Wharf development in 1993.

AP:ASSOCIATED PRESS; DARIO MITIDIERI/GETTY IMAGES







Albert Reichmann shows the Duchess of York a model of the Canary Wharf development in 1991; One Canada Square was its centrepiece, above right

Many claimed, not without schadenfreude, that the Reichmanns had finally paid the price for hubris and overconfidence. Paul Reichmann (obituary, October 28, 2013) in particular became driven by an obsession to be proved right about Canary Wharf. He joined a consortium of investors that bought back Canary Wharf from the banks for £800 million. By this stage Albert was taking more of a back seat, but had the satisfaction of seeing the family's vision for London come to fruition.

Albert was said to be the only person Paul Reichmann listened to

Citibank started building a new HQ there in 1997 and by the end of the next year only the top storey of One Canada Square was unlet. The Reichmanns exploited a legal loophole to negotiate a £150 million tax break to persuade HSBC to relocate from the City and start building a Canary Wharf HQ in 1999 — much to the chagrin of the Corporation of London. That year Canary Wharf Group floated on the stock market, valued at £2.5 billion. The vicissitudes of the project were a cause of extreme discomfort to Albert as details of O&Y's financial travails were exposed to public scrutiny.

Perhaps more than any of the Reichmanns, he exemplified their reputation for quiet, unshowy austerity and obsessive privacy. Described by associates as granite-tough in negotiation and a "brilliant property man", the observant Orthodox Jew remained living near to his younger brothers and business partners Paul and Ralph in the same Jewish suburb of Toronto, characterised by rows of neat bungalows. Among them were three bigger houses with brass door fittings where the Reichmanns lived with their wives and children in an area complete with a kosher market and teenage boys in yarmulkes playing basketball on the street. Albert would walk to the nearby synagogue on the Sabbath, a rank and file member of the congregation who would never consider moving to another part of the city.

He was born in Vienna in January 1929 (he was guarded about the exact date), the fourth of five children to Samuel and Renée (née Gestetner). The family originated from Hungary but moved to Austria in 1928 to escape increasing antisemitism. Samuel Reichmann made a fortune by devising a method of freezing eggs in winter, when they were in short supply, and exporting them all over Europe. The family was close-knit, studying the Talmud together each day.

After the Anschluss of Austria in 1938 the Reichmanns fled to Paris. In 1940, just ahead of advancing Nazi troops, they moved on to Spain and finally settled in Tangier, Morocco. Here Samuel reinvented himself as a foreign currency trader and prospered. Decades later his sons would extract an apology and retraction from Toronto Life magazine for its egregious allegation that Samuel's currency dealings had benefited the Nazis. Some of Samuel's profits were used by his wife Renée to devise a network of contacts using chocolate parcels as bribes to get Jews out of Europe. Young Albert spent hours packing up the chocolate and after the war worked closely with his father as a currency dealer.

When the political climate in Morocco took an antisemitic turn, the Reichmann children moved on. Albert's elder brothers, Edward and Louis, arrived in Montreal in the mid-1950s and founded Olympia Floor & Wall Tiles. Albert, Paul and Ralph arrived in Toronto in 1959. Paul and Ralph started an arm of Olympia in Toronto. After Albert realised that it was about 50 per cent cheaper to build warehouse space themselves with financial backing from their father, he founded York Industrial Developments and would go on to build more than 200 warehouses. In 1964 the companies merged to form Olympia & York. It began to develop commercial property schemes in Toronto, culminating in the 72-storey First Canadian Place in 1976, then the tallest building in the Commonwealth.

The Reichmanns' modus operandi was to buy derelict land in run-down areas and, in Albert's words, "create an address". This they achieved in the Eighties by developing the World Financial Center in lower east Manhattan, built on reclaimed land on the Hudson River using landfill excavated for the World Trade Center near by. Their vision was to trump Wall Street by creating modern skyscrapers with open-plan floor spaces suitable for modern trading floors. Merrill Lynch and American Express, among others, moved in. Rents pushed up to record levels.

As the eldest and the president of O&Y, Albert was regarded as the most cerebral of the brothers. Peter Foster, who wrote the 1993 book *Towers of Debt: The Rise and Fall of the Reichmanns*, said: "Albert was a bit more of a mensch. I mean, he was a bit more approachable, it seemed to me, but I mean, was very, very well thought of and, again, an exceptional businessman in his own right. He was probably the only one that Paul Reichmann would listen to."

In a rare interview, Albert said of his relationship with Paul: "We don't have the personality problems, the competitiveness, the jealousies, that some people do. With bankers and investment dealers, Paul is more active. With administration and construction, I'm more active. It always works out."

Among Albert's construction innovations were giant winches that could lift ready-made bathrooms and kitchens up to the top storeys of the buildings. Several towers would have jagged edges so as to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle and maximise acreage. Architectural flair was not always the priority but the Reichmanns were renowned for building on time and budget in a business beset by overruns.

In later years, Albert stepped away from the business and focused more on philanthropy, including a scheme that he had started to help Jews from the Soviet Union emigrate to Israel. He also funded seats of learning in Jerusalem.

His son Philip continued to work in property, prioritising healthcare schemes and care homes for the elderly before the family property company was sold in 2005. Philip is also a founding partner of ReichmannHauer Capital Partners. He survives his father. Reichmann's wife, Egoza, died in April.

Canary Wharf thrives to this day as a testament to the Reichmanns' bold vision.

Albert Reichmann, property developer, was born in January 1929. He died on December 17, 2022, aged 93

Baroness Linklater of Butterstone

Liberal Democrat peer, prison reformer and educationist who established a school for children with learning difficulties

The striking figure of Veronica Linklater — tall, straight-backed, with long tawny hair — seemed destined to become a pioneer in some social movement, as indeed she was. The eldest of three sisters known in 1960s society as the Lyle girls, she had been among the first students at the University of Sussex in 1963, and later used her degree in social sciences to make an impact wherever social justice was needed, most notably in the fields of prison reform and education.

During an early foray into a children's home in Fife, where she was playing her guitar to entertain them, one of the teenage girls came up to her as she was leaving and said, "Miss Lyle, can I come home with you? Will you be my mum?"

Miss Lyle resolved to campaign on behalf of those who made such pleas. Eventually, her crowning achievement was to found a school for "educationally fragile" children — a definition she created — such as her own daughter, who was born with mild cerebral palsy.

As a social worker in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, she spoke up for single mothers, the homeless and the drug dependent. She fought to reverse a council decision to remove a child from their mother, a prostitute: this became a TV documentary in the BBC's *Cause for Concern* series. In 1971, shocked by seeing how female relatives visiting prisoners in Pentonville were made to queue outside in all weathers, she opened the first visitors' centre in Britain, offering tea, biscuits and advice to wives and girlfriends. This was regarded by prison officers as an intrusion, and was shut down, but the prison then had to offer a similar facility of its own, and visitors' centres became common across the country.

As the first administrator of the Butler Trust, founded by David Astor in memory of the reforming home secretary Rab Butler to reward those working inside prisons to improve them, she visited most HMPs in the country, often alongside the trust's patron, the Princess Royal. They made a formidable pair: Princess Anne brisk and direct, Linklater full of concern about overcrowding and lack of educational opportunities. The first award, presented by the princess at Buckingham Palace, went to a prison officer in Stirling who had involved prisoners in a fish-breeding plant. Later, as a trustee of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Linklater would draw up a landmark report, *Rethinking Crime and Punishment*, to propose a range of reforms, including getting judges to visit prisons themselves so they might understand why prisons did not lead to improvements in law-abiding behaviour.

Coming from a strong Liberal background — her grandfather, Sir Archibald Sinclair, later Lord Thurso, had been leader of the Liberal Party, as well as Churchill's wartime air minister — she stood as a candidate in the famous 1995 by-election in Perth and Kinross, following the death of the Conservative MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn. Despite the SNP's surge to victory, Linklater improved the Liberal Democrat share to 11 per cent of the vote. Two years later, she and her husband were staying at a Highland cottage when a crackling call came through from Paddy Ashdown: "Are you sitting down? We would like you to become a working peer. We need an answer in 24 hours."

When a fire broke out in the drawing room it was she who first spotted it

It seemed a natural progression for a towering personality whose speeches always commanded attention.

Veronica Lyle was born in 1943, the eldest daughter of Colonel Michael Lyle and his wife, Elizabeth. She was brought up at the family homes of Riemore in the Perthshire hills and Glendelvine overlooking the River Tay. The Lyle family had been in shipping in Greenock, with a previous generation establishing the sugar company Tate & Lyle. Her mother's family were Sinclairs from Caithness, where she spent many holidays at the family's remote lodge of Dalnawillan on the River Thurso.

Before going to board at Cranborne Chase, Dorset, she attended Butterstone House, the school founded by her mother in a large stone manor house at the end of their drive, near Dunkeld, which had belonged to Miss Crabbie of Crabbie's Green Ginger Wine. Pupils were encouraged to bring their ponies and there were just two teachers, called Big Miss Grant and Little Miss Grant. The school would one day, 40 years on, become quite a different institution under Baroness Linklater.

ALAMY; JOHN KIRKBY



Linklater at the Houses of Parliament and with her daughter Freya in 2005



In 1966 Veronica Lyle was combining social work in the East End with playing her guitar and folk singing in clubs such as the Troubadour and the Student Prince, alongside musicians including Bert Jansch (who wrote a tune for her, played on his 12-string guitar), when she met the journalist Magnus Linklater, son of the novelist Eric, at a 21st birthday party. They were married in Dunkeld Cathedral in 1967 and lived in Islington, north London, where they had three children: Alexander, now a writer, who heads a hydro-electric organisation in Scotland; Archie, married with a family in Edinburgh; and Freya, the daughter for whom Linklater (who had been governor of several state schools in London) later founded her school. All survive her, along with her husband, a regular writer for The Times and former senior editor on The Sunday Times.

When Magnus was appointed editor of The Scotsman in 1988, the Linklaters moved back to their native land and set up home in the Georgian grandeur of Drummond Place, in Edinburgh's New Town. Here Veronica could be a hospitable hostess, entertaining actors, musicians and writers during the Edinburgh festival: she was passionate about music, particularly opera, and the Linklaters, who went to Glyndebourne every year, attended every significant concert at the festival for 30 years.

But her creation, the New School at Butterstone for children with learning difficulties who had been failed by the mainstream system, changed the lives of many youngsters over more than 30 years. Its first pupil was her daughter Freya, once dismissed by a London paediatrician as "a clumsy, badly put together child" but transformed into a sweet, sociable woman who told her mother, "I have some sunshine in my life now." The school's woodland setting and quiet calm, its simple aims and sensitive curriculum in life skills, fostered independence. Raising funds to keep it going — it had been redecorated with the help of inmates from Perth prison — was an achievement for which former pupils voiced gratitude.

Apart from her demanding family life, which she never neglected, she pursued her aims for prison reform in the Lords, making friends across party lines — once forgetting protocol by referring to fellow-peers as "my dears", rather than "my Lords", which drew great cheers, and was discreetly altered in Hansard. Her report on prison reform set out a series of innovations, such as residential rehabilitation for drug addicts, and the expansion of "restorative justice". She co-opted those, like Tony Adams, the former Arsenal and England footballer, with experience of life inside prison. The lord chief justice, Lord Woolf, signed off his introduction to her report with the words: "Taking this agenda forwards would do much to create a safer and a fairer country for us all."

Perhaps the most dramatic incident that drew on Linklater's fearless resourcefulness was the fire that broke out in the drawing room of Drummond Place at midnight on New Year's Eve in 2006. It was she who first spotted the tiny flame licking away at a branch of the Christmas tree in the corner. While the men of the party struggled with a garden hose and wielded foam fire extinguishers, Linklater was the one who ran into the street and dialled 999. She also remained calm and managed to arrange places where house guests could stay that night. The Linklaters' treasured paintings were lost, but she took the aftermath in her stride, with all the upheaval and the meticulous restoration of the house.

In Scotland she became a member of the Children's Panel, designed to keep potential offenders out of prison.

Among her charities and projects, she helped to set up the Pushkin prizes with their founder Lady Butter (obituary, August 9, 2022), which encouraged written English in schools, and was a director of Maggie's, the charity that runs cancer support centres. As a friend of Dunkeld Cathedral, where she worshipped, she invited many distinguished speakers, though once by mistake welcomed one of them "to this prison".

She proudly wore the Sinclair tartan and her Lyle brooch with the family motto: An I May (to which she used to add, sotto voce, "An I May Not") — a sentiment that reflected the sharp but compassionate eye she cast on the legal world, the penal system, and the press.

Baroness Linklater of Butterstone, prison reformer and educationist, was born on April 15, 1943. She died of complications from Alzheimer's disease on December 15, 2022, aged 79

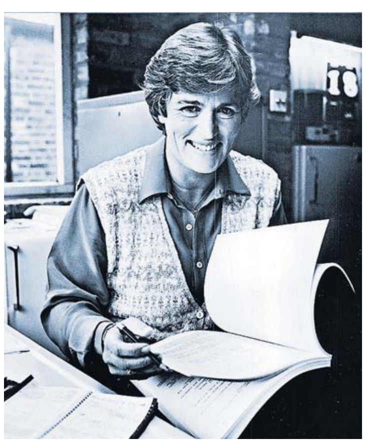
Gabrielle Beaumont

British film and TV director who broke into Hollywood and persuaded the producer of Dynasty to cast her friend Joan Collins

When Gabrielle Beaumont arrived in Hollywood, there were few female directors and the idea of an English woman taking charge of some of the most quintessential American television shows seemed preposterous. Yet she overcame objections to both her gender and her nationality to direct episodes of series such as *Miami Vice, LA Law, The Dukes of Hazzard* and *The Waltons*. She also directed episodes of *Baywatch* and *M*A*S*H* and boldly went where no woman had gone before to become the first female director employed on the *Star Trek* franchise.

However, her most memorable contribution to American television history came when she persuaded the producers of *Dynasty* to cast her friend Joan Collins as the most legendary Hollywood "bitch" of them all.

At the end of the soap's first series, the executive producer, Aaron Spelling, and the show's creators, Richard and Esther Shapiro, decided to spice up the plot by introducing the scheming Alexis Carrington and launching her on a vengeful crusade to destroy her ex-husband Blake. Initially, Spelling wanted Sophia Loren to play the part,



Beaumont at work in the early 1980s

and Elizabeth Taylor and Jessica Walter were also considered. Beaumont, who had been commissioned to direct the first episode of the second series, titled "Enter Alexis", lobbied for Joan Collins to be given the role, and with only two weeks left until shooting was due to begin, Spelling finally agreed.

It was an inspired piece of casting. Collins's arrival dramatically changed the tenor of the show, and *Dynasty* rose from modest viewing figures to No 1 in the ratings.

Beaumont had arrived in Hollywood in 1980 after her British-made horror film *The Godsend* had opened in the US. She brought with her two cans containing the various films she had made in her home country and secured a meeting with Spelling, a formidable Hollywood mover and shaker whose production company had a string of hit TV shows to its credit including *Charlie's Angels* and *The Love Boat*.

"Can you goddamn direct?" he asked, without bothering to look at her films.

"Goddamn, yes!" she replied and, according to The Hollywood Reporter, she was on a flight that same night to Nevada to take charge of an episode of the crime drama *Vega$*.

"I had always dreamt of going to Hollywood," she later said. "Everyone was so enthusiastic and didn't mind that one was a woman and they wanted to give you a chance, whereas in England it was still very tough."

She may have been helped by the fact that at the time, women were designated a "minority" in California law and Spelling and other producers were under pressure to give a break to female directors. If there was an element of positive discrimination, Beaumont made the most of the opportunity. After *Vega$* came *Dynasty* and Spelling employed her on numerous other shows, including *Melrose Place, Hart to Hart, Beverly Hills, 90210* and *Knots Landing*. For other producers she directed police dramas such as *Hill Street Blues* and *Cagney & Lacey*, and became a favourite with sci-fi fans, directing episodes of *Star Trek : The Next Generation, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Star Trek: Voyager*.

Her first marriage to the actor and writer Olaf Pooley, who was 20 years her senior and wrote the script for her film *The Godsend*, ended in divorce. Her second husband, Michael J Davis, whom she married in 1994, predeceased her in 2008. Davis worked as the cinematographer on a series of TV films she directed, including her 1993 adaptation of Jilly Cooper's *Riders* and, in 1998, *Diana: A Tribute to the People's Princess*, which told the story of the princess's final 18 months and her relationship with Dodi Fayed. Beaumont had no children of her own but is survived by a stepson, the cinematographer Ben Davis.

Born in London in April 1942, Gabrielle Beamont was the daughter of Diana Beaumont, a comedy actress, and Gabriel Toyne, a film stuntman and later an actor-manager. Her parents put her on the stage as a child; she was the juvenile lead in numerous plays before she landed a job at the BBC as a trainee film editor. She rose to become a production manager and an assistant director.

After making *Diana: A Tribute to the People's Princess*, she sold her home and boat in Los Angeles and her London townhouse and opted for a complete change of pace and lifestyle by retiring to Mallorca, where she had owned a holiday home since the 1960s. A familiar sight around the island shopping for provisions on a motor scooter, she opened a restaurant in the village of Fornalutx with her second husband, but still kept in touch with her old Hollywood friends.

Gabrielle Beaumont, film director, was born on April 7, 1942. She died after a short illness on October 8, 2022, aged 80

Law Report

Court of Protection could grant an injunction where it was just

Court of Appeal
Published on December 23, 2022

In re G (Court of Protection: Injunction)

Before Lord Justice Baker, Lord Justice Phillips and Lord Justice Nugee
[2022] EWCA Civ 1312
Judgment October 11, 2022

The Court of Protection could grant an injunction where it was just and convenient to do so. The test was satisfied where there was an interest which merited protection and a legal or equitable principle which justified exercising the power to order the defendant to do or not do something.

The Court of Appeal so stated when dismissing the appeals of the mother and father of G, a vulnerable adult, against whom injunctions had been made by Justice Hayden, sitting in the Court of Protection ([2022] EWCOP 25) on the application of an NHS trust and integrated care board, following an order that G be transferred from a paediatric hospital to a care home as a step-down measure forming part of an overall care plan to move her to her parents' care.

An appeal by G's grandmother was allowed on the ground that the grandmother had not received proper notice of the injunctive proceedings against her and, consequently, her case was remitted for rehearing.

Nicola Kohn for the mother; **John McKendrick KC** for the father; **Ian Brownhill** for the grandmother; **Michael Mylonas KC** and **Olivia Kirkbride** for the NHS trust and the integrated care board; **Sophia Roper KC** and **Benjamin Harrison** for G (by her litigation friend, the Official Solicitor).

LORD JUSTICE BAKER, giving the judgment of the court, said that G suffered from a serious degenerative neurological condition. She had been in a paediatric hospital since the age of 13. Although she had attained the age of majority eight years previously, she had remained in the paediatric hospital. All parties agreed that it was inappropriate for her to remain in a facility intended and designed for children. There was, however, profound disagreement about what should happen next.

The treating clinicians acknowledged that a return to the family home should be the ultimate aim but were of the view that, as a first step, G should move to a residential unit. The parents disagreed.

Following a "best interests" hearing under section 16 of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 the Court of Protection made certain orders concerning the arrangements to be made in respect of G. The judge expressed the hope that the relationship between the family and the treating clinicians would become "fully functional". Those hopes were not realised. On the contrary, the relationship deteriorated significantly.

According to the NHS trust and the integrated care board, efforts to formulate a care plan to facilitate G's move to a residential unit were being impeded by the conduct of members of G's family. The two bodies sought and were granted an injunction against the family members concerned.

The appeal raised, inter alia, the legal test to be applied by the Court of Protection when considering an application for an injunction.

The Court of Protection had power to grant injunctions under section 16(5) of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, both in the case where a deputy had been appointed under section 16(2)(b) and in the case where the court had made an order taking a decision for a person who lacked capacity under section 16(2)(a), and in doing so, it was exercising the injunctive powers conferred on it by section 47(1).

The test for the grant of such an injunction included the requirement in section 37(1) of the Senior Courts Act 1981 that it be just and convenient to do so. Following the Privy Council decision in *Convoy Collateral Ltd v Broad Idea International Ltd* ([2022] 2 WLR 703) that requirement was now to be understood as being satisfied where there was an interest which merited protection and a legal or equitable principle which justified exercising the power to order the defendant to do or not do something.

In the present case, as was likely to be the case wherever an injunction had been granted to prevent the court's decision under section 16(2)(a) from being frustrated or undermined, those requirements were satisfied because G's interest in the court's order being given effect to was an interest that merited protection, and the principle that the court could make ancillary orders to prevent its orders being frustrated was ample justification for the grant of injunctive relief if the facts merited it.

Solicitors: **Irwin Mitchell LLP**, Sheffield; **Simpson Millar**, Leeds; **MJC Law**, Nottingham; **Hill Dickinson LLP**, Liverpool; **Official Solicitor**.

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There is no Court Circular for December 22, 2022

Births, Marriages and Deaths

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AND suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2.13-14 (AV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Forthcoming Marriages

MR J. SPENCER AND MISS L. GORDON-FINNIH
The engagement is announced between Joseph, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Jeremy Spencer of Windsor, and Lydia, youngest daughter of Mrs Lesley Davis and Mr Stan Finnih of Knutsford, Cheshire.

MR T. E. JONES AND MISS E. L. THOMAS
The engagement is announced between Tom, son of Mr and Mrs Stephen Jones of Little Horwood, Buckinghamshire, and Emily, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Simon Thomas of Charlton, Northamptonshire.

Marriages

MR S. J. D. BAINES AND DR E. S. HARTMANN-ROCA
The marriage took place on 22nd October 2022, at La Paz, Bolivia, between Samuel and Emma Sophia. The marriage was celebrated in the chapel at the bride's family's hacienda in Chicani, near La Paz, followed by dinner and dancing attended by friends and family who flew over from all five continents.

Deaths

CAPRON Bridget. A much-loved sister and aunt, died peacefully at Polebrook Nursing Home on 13th December 2022, aged 91. Funeral on Friday 13th January at St Mary's Church, Southwick PE8 5BL at 2pm. No flowers but donations to Barnardo's or Oxfam.

CLARKE
Karen Sandra passed away on 16th December at St George's Hospital, London, aged 60. Beloved wife of Andrew Harper and mother of Toby and Ming. Funeral to be held at 10.30am on 17th January 2023 at St Michael's Church, Southfields SW18. Further details: Mears & Cotterill, 020 8874 7698.

DAVIES Thomas died peacefully on 7th December 2022, aged 90. Beloved husband, father and grandfather. Funeral service will be held on Friday 13th January at St John's Methodist Church, Hereford, at 12.45pm. No flowers please, but donations if desired for St Michael's Hospice and Sightsavers may be sent to Bayley Brothers, Hereford: 01432 272465.

FRANCIS Sheila. Mycologist and CMI. Passed away on 10th December 2022, aged 94.

LE GALLAIS Juliette, passed away peacefully at home on 18th December 2022, aged 96. A beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. A Thanksgiving Service will follow at a later date, all inquiries to A. J. Wakely & Sons Funeral Directors: 01460 52576.

GREENWOOD Geoffrey Wilson FREng, FRS, died peacefully on 13th December 2022, aged 93. Widower of Nancy Greenwood, survived by his three children and two grandchildren. Details of funeral available from Jason Heath of John Heath and Sons, Sheffield.

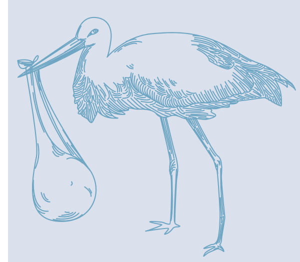
HICKMAN Revd John William died suddenly on 13th December 2022, aged 84. Barrister, late of the Royal Navy and Lloyd's Register of Shipping. Husband of Valerie, father of James and Edward, grandfather of Emma, Annabelle, Helena, Jemima and Charles. Funeral and Thanksgiving Service on Friday 30th December 2022 at 11am at All Hallows, Woolbeding.

MARSDEN Rear-Adm. Peter Nicholas, Royal Navy, beloved husband of Elizabeth, father of James, Jonathan and Jo, and grandfather of Tom, Henry, Ned, Millie, Freddy and Peter, died peacefully on 15th December 2022, aged 90, from complications arising from Parkinson's disease. Private cremation. A Service of Thanksgiving will be announced later.

MONTGOMERY
David Montgomery CMG, OBE, formerly of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, died peacefully on 18th December 2022 after a short illness, aged 95. Much-loved husband of Margaret, father of David and Alison, grandfather of Calum and father-in-law to Trina. Thank you for all the wonderful memories, we will miss you so much.

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Legal Notices

Notice to Members of Administrator's Proposals
In the High Court of Justice, Business & Property Courts of England & Wales, Insolvency & Companies List (ChD)
Court Number: CR-2022-004209
JOULES GROUP PLC
(Company Number 10164829)
Registered office: Interpath Ltd, 10 Fleet Place, London, EC4M 7RB
Principal trading address: The Joules Barn, Rockingham Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7QD

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Joint Administrators undertake to provide a copy of the statement of proposals for achieving the purpose of administration free of charge to any member of the company who applies in writing to Interpath Ltd, 10 Fleet Place, London, EC4M 7RB.

Joint Administrators: Ryan Grant (IP number 9637) of c/o Interpath Ltd, 2nd Floor, 45 Church Street, Birmingham, B3 2RT, William James Wright (IP number 9720) of Interpath Ltd, 10 Fleet Place, London, EC4M 7RB and Christopher Robert Pole (IP number 12690) of c/o Interpath Ltd, 2nd Floor, 45 Church Street, Birmingham, B3 2RT. Date of Appointment: 16 November 2022

Further information about this case is available from the offices of Interpath Ltd email JoulesShareholders@interpathadvisory.com

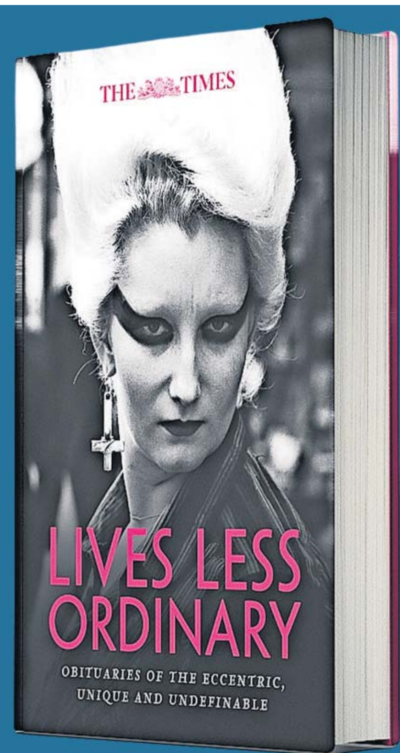
FLEXIL HOLDINGS LIMITED
Company Number: 03909696
Principal trading address: C/O Wey Court West, Union Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7PT

Notice is hereby given, that creditors of the Company are required, on or before 19 January 2023, to prove their debts by delivering their proofs (in the format specified in Rule 14.4 of the Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016) to the Joint Liquidators at KRE Corporate Recovery Limited, Unit 8, The Aquarium, 1-7 King Street, Reading, RG1 2AN or info@krecr.co.uk. If so required by notice from the Joint Liquidators, creditors must produce any document or other evidence which the Joint Liquidators consider is necessary to substantiate the whole or any part of a claim. **Note: The Directors of the Company have made a declaration of solvency and it is expected that all creditors will be paid in full.**

Date of Appointment: 19 December 2022.
Office Holder Details: Rob Keyes and Paul Ellison both of KRE Corporate Recovery Limited, Unit 8, The Aquarium, 1-7 King Street, Reading, RG1 2AN. For further details contact: The Liquidators, Email: info@krecr.co.uk, Tel: 01189 479090. Alternative Contact: Lee Lloyd.
Dated: 19 December 2022
Rob Keyes, Joint Liquidator

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THE TIMES

Weather

Today Mainly cloudy with spells of rain but drier and cooler over Scotland. Max 13C (55F), min -3C (27F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	6	PC	0.0	0.5
Aberporth	10	R	1.6	4.7
Anglesey	8	C	6.6	0.0
Aviemore	4	C	4.8	0.0
Barnstaple	12	C	2.8	**
Bedford	7	C	3.6	**
Belfast	6	PC	0.0	0.5
Birmingham	7	R	0.6	**
Bournemouth	12	C	5.0	0.3
Bridlington	6	C	1.8	**
Bristol	11	C	2.0	1.6
Camborne	10	R	6.4	**
Cardiff	10	C	2.6	0.7
Edinburgh	7	C	0.8	0.8
Eskdalemuir	6	C	2.4	**
Glasgow	7	**	2.0	**
Hereford	9	C	0.4	**
Herstmonceux	11	R	9.0	0.0
Ipswich	7	D	1.2	**
Isle of Man	8	PC	3.6	3.5
Isle of Wight	11	C	0.8	**
Jersey	11	R	18.2	0.3
Keswick	7	C	0.2	**
Kinloss	5	PC	0.8	1.5
Leeds	5	R	0.2	**
Lerwick	5	R	3.0	0.4
Leuchars	4	PC	0.2	0.4
Lincoln	5	D	1.2	**
Liverpool	6	D	1.4	**
London	11	C	0.2	1.0
Lyneham	10	C	2.4	2.1
Manchester	7	C	0.8	2.0
Margate	10	**	0.0	**
Milford Haven	11	M	2.4	**
Newcastle	6	C	0.4	**
Nottingham	6	R	2.0	0.9
Orkney	6	R	1.2	0.4
Oxford	11	C	0.2	**
Plymouth	11	R	5.4	**
Portland	12	C	6.4	**
Scilly, St Mary's	11	R	7.4	**
Shoreham	11	C	0.8	0.0
Shrewsbury	8	C	1.2	1.4
Snowdonia	8	D	4.6	**
Southend	8	C	0.6	0.0
South Uist	6	R	0.8	**
Stornoway	7	R	2.2	0.0
Tiree	8	PC	1.4	1.0
Whitehaven	6	C	3.6	0.1
Wick	6	PC	4.6	**
Yeovilton	12	C	0.2	1.4

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	21	S	Madeira	22	PC
Amsterdam	9	PC	Madrid	13	B
Athens	13	PC	Malaga	20	S
Auckland	25	S	Mallorca	19	PC
Bahrain	26	PC	Malta	17	PC
Bangkok	30	S	Melbourne	25	B
Barbados	29	PC	Mexico City	21	PC
Barcelona	17	PC	Miami	26	B
Beijing	-3	S	Milan	8	PC
Beirut	18	S	Mombasa	33	B
Belgrade	8	M	Montreal	0	C
Berlin	8	R	Moscow	1	DU
Bermuda	18	B	Mumbai	32	S
Bordeaux	16	R	Munich	10	B
Brussels	10	PC	Nairobi	24	B
Bucharest	-3	M	Naples	14	PC
Budapest	2	M	New Orleans	11	DU
Buenos Aires	29	PC	New York	4	PC
Cairo	19	PC	Nice	14	PC
Calcutta	25	S	Nicosia	20	PC
Canberra	15	R	Oslo	0	SN
Cape Town	24	S	Paris	13	B
Chicago	-4	DU	Perth	34	S
Copenhagen	6	M	Prague	6	R
Corfu	15	PC	Reykjavik	-6	S
Delhi	15	S	Riga	2	DU
Dubai	27	S	Rio de Janeiro	23	R
Dublin	6	B	Riyadh	23	S
Faro	18	PC	Rome	16	PC
Florence	11	M	San Francisco	11	PC
Frankfurt	11	B	Santiago	30	S
Geneva	11	SH	São Paulo	20	D
Gibraltar	20	S	Seoul	-6	PC
Helsinki	3	B	Seychelles	30	PC
Hong Kong	18	S	Singapore	28	B
Honolulu	26	PC	St Petersburg	3	DU
Istanbul	11	S	Stockholm	4	B
Jerusalem	21	PC	Sydney	21	SH
Johannesburg	21	PC	Tel Aviv	21	PC
Kuala Lumpur	27	SH	Tenerife	25	S
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	8	R
Lanzarote	21	PC	Vancouver	-8	PC
Las Palmas	22	S	Venice	8	M
Lima	22	B	Vienna	0	R
Lisbon	18	B	Warsaw	4	B
Los Angeles	18	PC	Washington	6	PC
Luxor	19	S	Zurich	12	SH

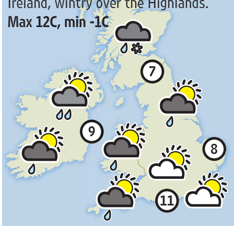
Five days ahead

A generally mild and blustery Christmas period with outbreaks of rain and cloudy skies

Tomorrow

Mainly dry and mild with sunny spells in England and Wales, but the risk of a shower in the west. Rather cloudy with showery rain over Scotland and Ireland, wintry over the Highlands.

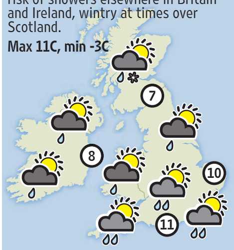
Max 12C, min -1C



Christmas Day

Rather cloudy with outbreaks of rain in the southeast. Sunny spells and the risk of showers elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, wintry at times over Scotland.

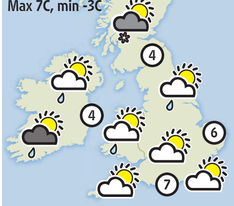
Max 11C, min -3C



Boxing Day

Mostly dry with sunny spells over England and Wales, but a few showers in Wales and northwest England. Sunny spells and wintry showers across Scotland and Ireland.

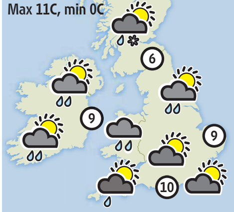
Max 7C, min -3C



Tuesday

Rather cloudy and blustery with outbreaks of rain spreading eastwards across Britain and Ireland, turning wintry in Scotland. Mainly dry in southeast England.

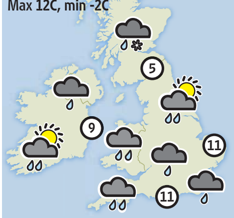
Max 11C, min 0C



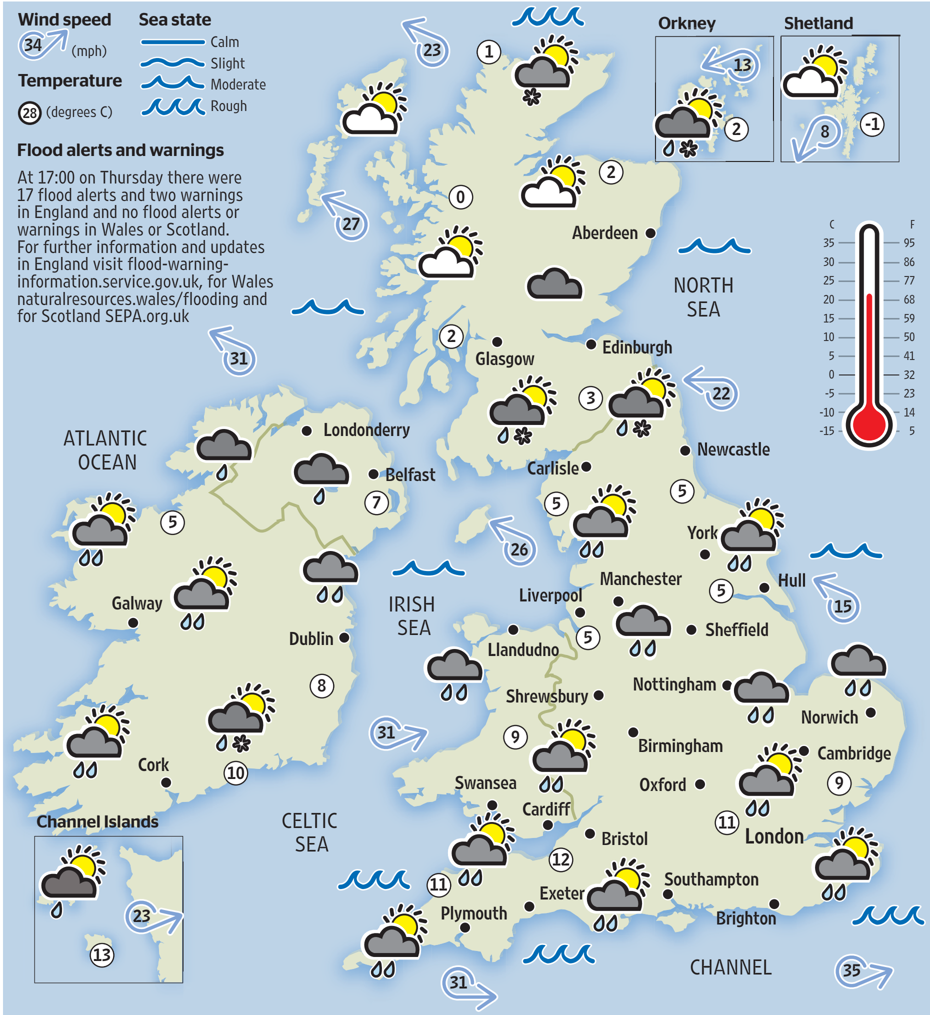
Wednesday

Mild and mainly cloudy with outbreaks of rain spreading northeastwards, turning heavy at times and perhaps to sleet or snow in Scotland.

Max 12C, min -2C



The Times weather page is provided by Weatherquest



General situation: Cloudy with outbreaks of rain spreading northeastwards, although chilly in Scotland with wintry showers.

SW Eng, Cen S Eng, SE Eng, W Mids, Wales, Channel Is: Cloudy with rain clearing to bring a brighter afternoon with showers. Light to moderate easterly wind, veering moderate or fresh southwesterly. Maximum 13C (55F), minimum 4C (39F).

E Anglia, E Mids, London: Dry with fog patches at first, then turning cloudy with showery rain before becoming brighter later. Light to moderate southeasterly wind, veering southwesterly. Maximum 11C (52F), minimum 5C (41F).

Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Cloudy with rain spreading northwards, turning heavy and slow-moving in places. Sunshine and showers over southern areas in the afternoon. Moderate to fresh easterly wind, veering southwesterly. Maximum 10C (50F), minimum 1C (34F).

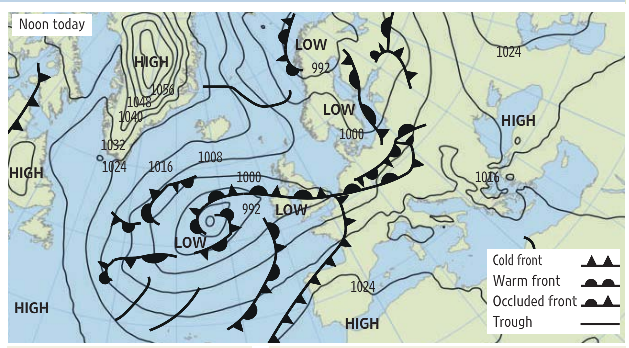
Cen Highland, Moray Firth, Aberdeen, N Isles, NW Scotland, NE Scotland, Argyll: Mainly dry with sunny spells and the risk of a wintry shower. Light to moderate easterly wind. Maximum 4C (39F), minimum -3C (27F).

E Eng, Cen N Eng, NW Eng, NE Eng, IoM, Lake District, Glasgow, Borders, Edinburgh and Dundee, SW Scotland: Showers at first, turning to longer spells of rain in the afternoon. Light to moderate easterly wind. Maximum 7C (45F), minimum 0C (32F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	00:38	4.3	12:58	4.3
Avonmouth	06:44	13.0	19:09	13.1
Belfast	10:34	3.6	23:02	3.6
Cardiff	06:31	12.1	18:57	12.1
Devonport	05:16	5.4	17:42	5.4
Dover	10:24	6.7	22:52	6.7
Dublin	09:50	5.7	22:14	5.7
Falmouth	04:41	5.1	17:07	5.0
Greenock	--:--	--	12:09	3.5
Harwich	11:13	4.0	23:41	4.0
Holyhead	09:51	5.7	22:16	5.7
Hull	05:40	7.4	18:02	7.6
Leith	01:56	5.5	14:15	5.6
Liverpool	10:37	9.3	23:02	9.3
London Bridge	01:06	6.8	13:28	7.2
Lowestoft	08:47	2.5	21:18	2.5
Milford Haven	05:40	7.0	18:05	7.0
Morecambe	10:48	9.4	23:12	9.4
Newhaven	10:34	6.7	23:04	6.7
Newquay	04:32	7.0	16:56	7.1
Oban	05:14	4.0	17:33	4.0
Penzance	04:04	5.5	16:27	5.5
Portsmouth	10:51	4.8	23:20	4.7
Shoreham	10:40	6.3	23:10	6.3
Southampton	10:04	4.7	22:54	4.6
Swansea	05:49	9.3	18:12	9.3
Tees	02:56	5.4	15:19	5.5
Weymouth	06:11	2.2	18:36	2.0



Synoptic situation

An area of low pressure to the west of Ireland will push a complex set of fronts over central and southern Britain and Ireland, bringing thick cloud and outbreaks of rain. Feeling cooler in Scotland with the risk of snow showers. Low pressure will dominate over the British Isles during the next few days with blustery winds and spells of rain.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Exeter, Devon, 12.8C
Coldest: Cairngorm, -2.5C
Wettest: Jersey, Channel Islands, 18.2mm
Sunniest: Aberporth, 4.7hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 08.04
Sun sets: 15.54
Moon rises: 08.37
Moon sets: 15.29
First quarter: December 30

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	15:57-08:17
Belfast	16:30-08:15
Birmingham	16:26-07:47
Cardiff	16:36-07:47
Exeter	16:41-07:44
Glasgow	16:15-08:17
Liverpool	16:25-07:56
London	16:24-07:35
Manchester	16:22-07:54
Newcastle	16:10-08:00
Norwich	16:12-07:35
Penzance	16:52-07:49
Sheffield	16:19-07:50

Weather Eye

Paul Simons



Why is snow at Christmas such an obsession, with snowy cards, volumes of fake snow and songs about a white Christmas? It's actually something of a myth because December 25 in Britain is more likely to be grey, damp and mild, especially in the south. Despite the occasional wintry weather, snow at Christmas is becoming increasingly scarce.

The white Christmas tradition was dreamt up by Charles Dickens, who piled on heaps of snowy scenes in *The Pickwick Papers* and *A Christmas Carol* that captured the public imagination. "They stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings," Dickens wrote in *A Christmas Carol*.

It is often thought that he was describing snowy winters that he had experienced as an adult but that is not quite true. For much of his life there was no snow at Christmas and it was even mild on occasions, especially in the 1840s and 1850s when many Christmas traditions took hold, such as decorated trees, cards and crackers.

But there were some truly cold Decembers in Dickens's early life. Born on February 17, 1812, he would have experienced six white Christmases in the first nine years of his life during a cold period when volcanic eruptions in particular upset world weather patterns. So perhaps the Dickensian snow owes more to nostalgia, harking back to his childhood.

In recent times there has been less snow at Christmas than in earlier decades, from 1970 to 2010, and Decembers as a whole have also had less snow. Even in northern Scotland there has been a sharp fall in days of snow over the past ten years. The explanation is clear: average temperatures on December 25 have risen, as have temperatures for the whole of the month, and there are now fewer snowy spells.

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Sport

Murray pushes Evans all the way in defeat

Tennis
Stuart Fraser Tennis Correspondent

Victory for England against Scotland in the Schroders Battle of the Brits should not discourage Andy Murray for the season ahead. His conqueror, Dan Evans, saw enough during their match yesterday to suggest the three-times grand-slam champion is still capable of challenging for titles at the age of 35.

Evans prevailed 6-4, 3-6, 10-8 in a closely fought encounter to put England in a commanding position at the end of the afternoon session. Paul Jubb then followed in the evening to wrap up an away triumph in Aberdeen with a comfortable 6-2, 6-2 win against Aidan McHugh.

The outcome could have been different had Murray closed out an 8-7 lead in the deciding tie-break against Evans. He had typically dug deep to level this entertaining battle at one set all, dashing around the court at speed with some remarkable defensive recoveries, before the final three points of the match crucially went the way of his fellow British tennis stalwart.

"I missed a volley because I was watching him run," Evans, 32, said. "He has learnt how to hang in those points, his level is still there, he's training as hard as anybody and I think it was a very high level out there. It was a great atmosphere and it got me feeling like it was a real match. There's no ranking points or or anything on it, but it felt as serious as it could possibly be."

After an intense triumph over Jack Draper the night before, Murray's body held out for most of the match. Understandably there was a little fatigue towards the end, which was inevitable given that he has not competed since a first-round exit at the Paris Masters on October 31. He will now spend Christmas at home in Surrey before heading to Australia for the Adelaide International, beginning on January 2.

"I was happy with how I moved across both matches," Murray said. "Maybe I was not quite as sharp at the beginning today as I was yesterday, which is understandable. It's quite a fast court and it means you need to move quickly to get to the ball, which was really good for me.

"My fitness level at the end was not quite where I'd like it to be. But overall the two singles matches were good. I served better today and got a lot more free points on my serves. The match went on and then I got into a bit of rhythm there but it was just unfortunate I couldn't get through at the end."

Murray claimed a minor form of revenge later by teaming up with his brother, Jamie, for a 6-3, 6-4 win against Evans and Neal Skupski in the dead-rubber doubles match, which made the final scoreline more respectable at 8-4 to England.

The sellout crowd of 7,000 at the P&J Live arena lapped up the performance by the siblings in what could potentially be their final appearance together on Scottish soil. It is likely that they will play again somewhere on the tour, although Andy played down the suggestion of a regular partnership to see out their careers.

"At times when I had the hip injury I thought if I wasn't able to play singles that it was something to look to, playing doubles for a year or some of the major events together," Andy said. "We had spoken about that a bit in the past. Whether it happens in the future, I don't know because we have both got families and stuff now.

"It would have to be something we both really wanted to do and we would need the support of our families to go and potentially do that for a year or so. But I've loved playing with him. We had some great moments in the Davis Cup together. Unbelievable memories."

This was another successful instalment of the Battle of the Brits series, which was initially set up by Jamie and the tournament director, Mary Greenham, during the initial Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 to provide playing opportunities for British competitors at a time when the official tour was suspended. A total attendance of about 20,000 over three sessions shows that there is viability for a rematch.

ROB CASEY/SNS



Murray dug deep against Evans, inset, in the Battle of the Brits in Aberdeen but the Englishman fought back in the deciding tie-break to claim a crucial victory

Men to make a splash

Olympics Men will be allowed to compete in artistic swimming at the Olympics for the first time from Paris 2024 onwards as part of the "sport's evolution towards inclusivity".

The International Olympic Committee has rubber-stamped the proposal, with up to two men eligible to be picked in the eight-strong team event.

While men have been able to compete at the World Aquatics Championships since 2015, the next Olympics will mark a historic change in a sport that first appeared at the Games in 1984 as synchronised swimming.

Pakistan remove Raja

Cricket Ramiz Raja has been removed as chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board in the aftermath of the team's 3-0 Test defeat by England.

The ousting of Imran Khan as prime minister in April removed part of Raja's powerbase in a country where appointments are ratified at government level and home series defeats by Australia and England on dull surfaces did not help matters.

A committee including Shahid Afridi and Sana Mir, the former captains of the men's and women's teams, has been set up to elect a successor.

Ladies' record prize

Golf The Ladies European Tour has announced a record prize fund of €35 million (about £31 million) for its 30 official events in 2023. The schedule will begin in Kenya in February and take the tour to 21 countries, with the Aramco Saudi Ladies International featuring an elevated prize fund of $5 million (£4.2 million).

One of the highlights will be September's Solheim Cup at Finca Cortesin in Spain, where Europe will be seeking an unprecedented third straight victory against the United States.

Racing results

Ayr

Going: good to soft

12.30 (2m) 1, **Beat Box** (Edward Austin, 9-4 fav); 2, Atlantic Dancer (5-1); 3, Dot Cotton (20-1). 9 ran. 6½l, 10l. J Ewart.
1.00 (2m) 1, **Bois Guillbert** (S Mulqueen, 5-2); 2, Sailing Grace (6-4 fav); 3, Beat The Retreat (18-1). 6 ran. 3l, 24l. Miss Lucinda V Russell.
1.30 (2m) 1, **Ruby Island** (Jamie Hamilton, 5-2); 2, Thistle Ask (13-2); 3, Fia Fuinidh (40-1). 14 ran. 7½l, 7l. M Walford.
2.00 (2m 4f 100yd) 1, **Lock's Corner** (Jonjo O'Neill Jr., 17-2); 2, Gaius (12-1); 3, Gold Emery (9-4 fav). 8 ran. NR: Wild Polly. 1½l, 1¼. Jonjo O'Neill.
2.30 (2m 5f 91yd) 1, **Choosethenews** (Jamie Hamilton, 11-4); 2, Step Above (15-8 fav); 3, Are U Wise To That (9-4). 6 ran. 6l, ¾l. M Walford.
3.00 (3m 20yd) 1, **Hitman Fred** (Craig Nichol, 12-1); 2, Lord Roco (3-1); 3, Destiny Is All (3-1). 8 ran. NR: Rath An Iuir. ½l, 3¼l. R Dobbin.
3.30 (2m 4f 110yd) 1, Lisloran (Ross Chapman, 5-2 fav); 2, Warriors Story (10-3); 3, Sputnik (9-1). 10 ran. Nk, 18l. R Ross.
Jackpot: Not won.
Placepot: £45.70. Quadpot: £16.60.

Lingfield Park

Going: standard

11.50 (7f 1yd) 1, **Free Solo** (Saffie Osborne, 16-5); 2, Calonne (4-1); 3, Healing Power (7-1). 10 ran. 1¼l, 1¾l. J A Osborne.
12.20 (7f 1yd) 1, **Regal Glory** (L Morris, 5-1); 2, Bernadine (9-1); 3, Angel Of Antrim (8-1). 11 ran. ½l, ¾l. Mrs L J Mongan.
12.50 (7f 1yd) 1, **New Definition** (T P Queally, Evens fav); 2, Hiatus (5-1); 3, Admiral Jack (14-1). 12 ran. NR: Starproof. 4¾l, 1¾l. J Tate.
1.20 (1m 2f) 1, **Nazymbek** (J Mitchell, 4-6 fav); 2, Muir Wood (10-1); 3, Demilion (12-1). 10 ran. NR: Victor Laszlo . 2¾l, ½l. R Varian.
1.50 (1m 2f) 1, **Paris Lights** (W Buick, 10-11 fav); 2, Lady Loulou (7-4); 3, Into The Spotlight (11-2). 6 ran. NR: Tartarus. 2½l, 2¾l. G Boughey.
2.20 (1m 2f) 1, **Al Agaila** (Luke Morris, 7-2); 2, Makinmedoit (16-5fav); 3, Tequilamockingbird (7-1). 10 ran. ½l, ns. Simon and Ed Crisford.
2.50 (1m 1yd) 1, **Starshiba** (Jason Watson, 7-2); 2, Mayfair Gold (6-1); 3, They Don't Know (11-2). 10 ran. l, ns. D O'Meara.
3.20 (6f 1yd) 1, **Porfin** (Grace McEntee, 11-2); 2, Swiss Pride (3-1 fav); 3, Incrimination (14-1). 9 ran. 1¼l, ¾l. P S McEntee.
Placepot £27.50.
Quadpot £2.80.

Ffos Las

Going: soft (good to soft in places)

12.40 (2m 4f) 1, **Hurricane Highway** (Adam Wedge, 16-1); 2, Firestream (6-5 fav); 3, Great Name That (33-1). 14 ran. NR: Spring Meadow. 6l, 3¼l. Evan Williams.
1.10 (1m 7f 182yd) 1, **Altobelli** (Bryan Carver, 5-4 fav); 2, Uncle Bert (4-1); 3, Inedit Star (9-4). 15 ran. NR: Half Dozen. 1¾l, 4½l. H Fry.
1.40 (2m 4f 199yd) 1, **Complete Unknown** (H Cobden, 15-8); 2, First Lord De Cuet (28-1); 3, Bowtogreatness (11-10 fav). 8 ran. ¾l, 9l. P F Nicholls.
2.10 (2m 7f 177yd) 1, **Fairlawn Flyer** (S Bowen, 12-1); 2, New Age Dawning (13-2); 3, Run To Milan (22-1). 12 ran. 3l, 11l. P Bowen.
2.40 (2m 4f) 1, **Time Flies By** (James Bowen, 5-1); 2, Rocky Man (5-2 fav); 3, Kepagge (9-2). 10 ran. 2l, 5l. N J Henderson.
3.10 (2m 7f 191yd) 1, **Jasmiwa** (Sam Twiston-Davies, 9-2); 2, Shesupincourt (5-1); 3, Rocked Up (4-1). 10 ran. 5l, 1l. N A Twiston-Davies.
3.40 (1m 7f 182yd) 1, **Colonial Empire** (Alan Johns, 6-4 fav); 2, Weaver's Answer (12-1); 3, Barrier Peaks (20-1). 14 ran. NR: Borak, Hoochygoochyman, Syr Maffos, Tribal Commander. 6½l, 4¼l. Tim Vaughan.
Placepot: £36.80.
Quadpot: £27.30.

Southwell

Going: standard

5.00 (4f 214yd) 1, **Blazing Hot** (Oliver Stammers, 6-1); 2, Pepper Streak (11-1); 3, Sir Gregory (13-2). 14 ran. 1l, nk. D H Brown.
5.30 (1m 4f 14yd) 1, **Vision Of Hope** (Kevin Stott, 9-1); 2, Starfighter (4-1); 3, Visitant (11-2). 9 ran. NR: Foursome, Golden Vintage. ½l, ¾l. G Boughey.
6.00 (1m 3f 23yd) 1, **Qaasid** (G Lee, 4-1); 2, Diamond Ranger (9-4 fav); 3, Night Bear (6-1). 8 ran. NR: Hezmie. Hd, 1¾l. Miss J A Camacho.
6.30 (1m 13yd) 1, **Capparis** (Cam Hardie, 15-2); 2, Eagle Eyed Freddie (11-4 fav); 3, Waleyfa (22-1). 12 ran. NR: Royal Debut. 1¼l, 1¼l. R A Fahey.
7.00 (1m 13yd) 1, **Mac Ailey** (D Allan, 14-1); 2, Pittsburg (11-2); 3, Kodebreaker (6-1). 12 ran. ½l, sh hd. T D Easterby.
7.30 (1m 13yd) 1, **Zealot** (Alistair Rawlinson, 5-4 fav); 2, Chief's Will (40-1); 3, Masqool (8-1). 12 ran. 2¾l, ¾l. M Appleby.
8.00 (7f 14yd) 1, **Falesia Beach** (Kevin Stott, 9-2); 2, Aquamas (9-2); 3, Queen Of Burgundy (14-1). 11 ran. NR: Lilikoi, Miss Calculation, Sid's Annie. Sh hd, 1¼l. J G Portman.
8.30 (2m 102yd) 1, **Zuckerberg** (Lewis Edmunds, 28-1); 2, Bird For Life (8-1); 3, Reset Button (11-8 fav). 9 ran. NR: King Charles, Vertice. ½l, ¾l. J Candlish.
Placepot: £105.00.
Quadpot: £14.70.

Results

Football

Carabao Cup: Fourth round

Man City	(1) **3**	**Liverpool**	(1) **2**
Haaland 10		Carvalho 20	
Mahrez 47, Aké 58		Salah 48	

Women's Champions League Group A

Chelsea	(0) **3**	**PSG**	(0) **0**
Kerr 42			
James 55, 62			

Cricket

Second Test: Mirpur: First day of five Bangladesh 227 (Monimul Haque 84); India 19-0.

Tennis

Battle of the Brits
Aberdeen: Singles D Evans (Eng) bt A Murray (Scot) 6-4, 3-6, 10-8; P Judd (Eng) bt A McHugh (Scot) 6-2, 6-2. **Doubles** Jubb and N Skupkski (Eng) bt J Murray and J O'Mara (Scot) 6-4, 5-7, 10-6; A Murray and J Murray bt Evans and Skupski 6-3, 6-4. England beat Scotland 8-4.

Fixtures

Football

Scottish Premiership Ross County v Rangers (7.30); Motherwell v Kilmarnock (7.45).

Rugby union

Gallagher Premiership London Irish v Saracens (7.45); Newcastle Falcons v Sale Sharks.
United Rugby Championship (selected): Glasgow v Edinburgh (7.35).

Burgess denies cocaine use after roadside drug arrest

Rugby league
Elgan Alderman

Sam Burgess has denied taking cocaine after he was arrested for allegedly failing a roadside drug test.

The former England rugby league and union international was pulled over by police in Kingsford, Sydney, yesterday morning. He posted a statement on Instagram saying that he had initially tested positive in a random drug test, but he then went to an independent facility where he returned a negative result.

Police also allege that Burgess, 34, was caught driving with a suspended licence, though he later claimed in a statement that his full licence had been returned to him after a ten-month ban.

"Police stopped a BMW X5 for the purpose of roadside testing," a police statement read. "Checks revealed the driver, a 34-year-old man, had a suspended licence. The man was arrested after returning a positive result on a drug test. Police will await the result of a secondary oral fluid analysis."

Burgess, who represented England at World Cups in both codes and is an assistant coach at South Sydney Rabbitohs, pleaded guilty last year to drug-driving in an unregistered car, but said in his statement he was now sober.

"After being pulled over by an unmarked police car, an initial roadside drug test was taken, which showed positive to cocaine," Burgess wrote.



Burgess pleaded guilty last year to drug-driving

"After I was released from the police station, I immediately and voluntarily went to an independent, internationally accredited testing facility and undertook a urine test. The urine sample returned a negative result. I deny any suggestion that I have drugs in my system."

Burgess is due to appear at Waverley local court on February 15.

‘I’m back, baby’ – revamped Smith’s warning to England

Being felled by Jofra Archer in 2019 was the genesis for Australian’s change of technique, **Steve James** reports

The former Australia all-rounder, Simon O’Donnell, has described it as “one of the most amazing things I’ve seen in sport”. And, no, he wasn’t talking about the England Test team’s transformation under Brendon McCullum and Ben Stokes. Instead, he was referring to Steve Smith’s change of technique this year.

It has certainly been the talk of Australia this season — and beyond too. Indeed, I even found myself discussing it with Warren Gatland, the returning Wales rugby coach, in the media room in Cardiff before an autumn international recently.

Smith is always an interesting topic of conversation, simply because he has an unerring ability to surprise. He is 33 and, with a Test average of 60.41, is generally considered to be Australia’s finest batsman since the incomparable Sir Donald Bradman — even if Smith’s great mate, Marnus Labuschagne, is pushing hard for that mantle too (he now averages 59.94 in Test cricket and is just above Smith at the top of the Test world rankings). Yet, this year, Smith decided that he had to make fundamental changes to his batting.

“I felt I was getting stuck,” he said. “I was limiting my scoring opportunities.”

The decision was taken by Smith himself — “no advice”, he said — but it was a pretty drastic overhaul upon which he embarked. As a result, English fans will see a very different batsman in the Ashes next summer, although those who burnt the midnight oil to watch the three meaningless one-day internationals against Australia last month will have already had a sneak preview of the revamped Smith. Those matches were certainly not meaningless for him. During the first game in Adelaide he could be heard shouting: “I’m back, baby” to his partner, David Warner, after one delightfully timed and executed cover drive.





Smith’s stance used to be wide open, showing all three stumps, as in the 2019 Ashes, left, but is now more traditional, as against South Africa last week, right

It was during that innings, a match-winning 80 not out, that at a drinks break he was asked on the television coverage about what changes he had made to his method.

“Lots,” he replied with a laugh. And he is right. The signature huge back-and-across movement before the ball is bowled has gone. Smith once stood on leg stump and then moved so far across that he was often outside off stump, but now he stands on middle and moves only a little. There is a lot less fidgeting too, much less of the superstitious helmet-touching and pad-tapping.

Crucially, Smith is also staying much more side-on. I never thought that Smith’s previous technique — first used against England at Perth in the 2013-14 Ashes series, when he was being targeted by a barrage of bouncers — was quite as unorthodox as most assumed.

The movements before the ball is bowled are largely immaterial. If you could ignore them, then Smith’s position at ball release was generally conventional, with his head forward and eyes level. Yes, his way of moving his hands back, probably initially influenced by a strong bottom-handed grip underneath the handle, was to move the bat first towards gully before bringing it back around to find a straight line to the ball. But Bradman himself used that so-called rotary method — even if Smith had copied it from Mark Waugh. And Smith usually played the ball late.

Most of his basics were sound. However, he was always a little open when the ball was bowled. As time wore on, that position became ever more open and his weight ever more on his back leg (a batsman’s back pad protruding outside the front one in their set-up is always a tell-tale sign of poor weight distribution).

Smith found it less easy to play the ball late and his off-side game suffered, as did his ability to play fast, short-pitched bowling.

Indeed, Greg Chappell, in a sage recent column for The Sydney Morning Herald, pinpointed the moment he was felled by Jofra Archer at Lord’s in the 2019 Ashes as being the “genesis of his change”.

It was during that series that Smith’s Test average reached its highest point of 64.81, but his returns since then had been, by his lofty standards, more mortal, with only two centuries in 19 Tests before the recent series against West Indies.

Archer, when fit, is clearly very quick but New Zealand’s left-armer Neil Wagner had also troubled Smith with short stuff at a lesser pace. You can see why Smith was worried. The more square-on you are as a batsman, the bigger the target you present to the bowler. You have to defend with your hands out in front of your body simply because, as Smith has said, “your stomach gets in the way”.

As for the pull or hook shots, you can only really swivel them away behind square on the leg side, which was Smith’s main scoring area anyway. In short, he had become a little too predictable.

By staying side-on now (you cannot see his [back] right shoulder as he prepares for the bowler), Smith is, as Chappell observed in his column, actually taking his game forwards rather than just being “back” to where he was, as announced in Adelaide.

That cover drive to which Smith was referring was a great example of what being side-on can bring: the ability for the top hand (the steering wheel of a car) to be in control a lot longer before the bottom hand (the accelerator) provides the power for the stroke, while still being able to use the rotary pick-up because that feels most comfortable for him. The smaller trigger movement also means that it is easier for Smith to keep his weight slightly forward and therefore lean into those drives.

A vast improvement has also been seen in his pull shots, which are always played most eye-catchingly — as well as most devastatingly for the fast bowler, whose backbone is challenged if pulled in front of square — when the ball is just outside the line of your body on the off side. Smith had got to the point where he could not play those shots any more,



Smith had to retire hurt, and pull out

Root to play in UAE T20 league after being rested for ODIs

Elizabeth Ammon

Joe Root will play in the inaugural edition of the UAE T20 franchise league, having been rested for England’s ODI series in South Africa.

The former Test captain has signed for the Dubai Capitals franchise in the ILT20, in what will be only his second appearance in an overseas T20 competition, having played for Sydney Thunder in Australia’s Big Bash League in 2018-19.

Root has not played an international T20 since May 2019 but wants to continue to be involved in the format and, after stepping down as captain of the Test side earlier this year, he will have more opportunities to manage his workload to explore the shortest format. He averages 32.54 in 88 T20 matches, at a strike rate of 127, and with a top score of 92 not out.

Root has also entered himself for today’s IPL auction. He put himself forward in 2018 and went unsold — but the link with Delhi Capitals, who share ownership with the UAE Dubai Capitals, should help his chances of securing a contract. The 14-man squad for the three-match ODI series against South Africa, which starts at the end of January, includes Jofra Archer — who is set to play for England for the first time in nearly two years — and Ben Duckett, who is recalled six years on from his previous 50-over appearances.

Archer has not played international cricket since March last year because of elbow and back injuries. The 27-year-old fast bowler is recovering well, according to the ECB, and was part of the Test team’s training camp in the UAE last month. He played for England Lions against England in a warm-up match, bowling nine overs at almost full pace.

Duckett, 28, has been rewarded for a fine Test series against Pakistan, in which he scored 357 runs at an average of 71.40. The Nottinghamshire batsman has played three ODIs for England, the most recent being against Bangladesh in Chittagong in October 2016. Jason Roy, the opener, has been retained despite some poor recent form, while

England in South Africa

Squad Jos Buttler (Lancashire, captain), Moeen Ali (Warwickshire), Jofra Archer (Sussex), Harry Brook (Yorkshire), Sam Curran (Surrey), Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire), Dawid Malan (Yorkshire), Adil Rashid (Yorkshire), Jason Roy (Surrey), Phil Salt (Lancashire), Olly Stone (Nottinghamshire), Reece Topley (Surrey), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), David Willey (Northamptonshire).

Schedule

First ODI Friday, January 27, Bloemfontein (11am GMT).

Second ODI Sunday, January 29, Bloemfontein (8am GMT).

Third ODI Wednesday, February 1, Kimberley (11am GMT).

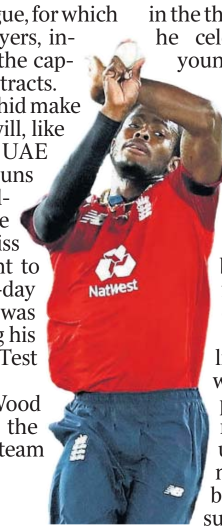
Reece Topley is back to boost the bowling attack after injury ruled him out of the T20 World Cup. Harry Brook, the Yorkshire middle-order batsman who scored a century in each of the three Tests against Pakistan and was named man of the series, has also been included in the squad. The three one-day matches take place between the group and knockout stages of the new South African T20 franchise league, for which a number of England players, including Sam Curran and the captain, Jos Buttler, have contracts.

Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid make up the spin attack. Both will, like Root, be taking part in the UAE T20 tournament, which runs from mid-January to mid-February but, unlike the Yorkshire batsman, will miss a week of the tournament to take part in this one-day series. Liam Livingstone was not available after injuring his knee at the start of the Test tour to Pakistan.

Ben Stokes and Mark Wood were not considered for the ODI series, with the Test team flying to New Zealand at the end of January for two matches the following month. Rehan Ahmed, 18, is unlikely to be part of that Test squad, due to be named today, despite his dream debut in the third Test against Pakistan, when he celebrated becoming England’s youngest male cricketer by taking seven wickets to help them seal a 3-0 whitewash.

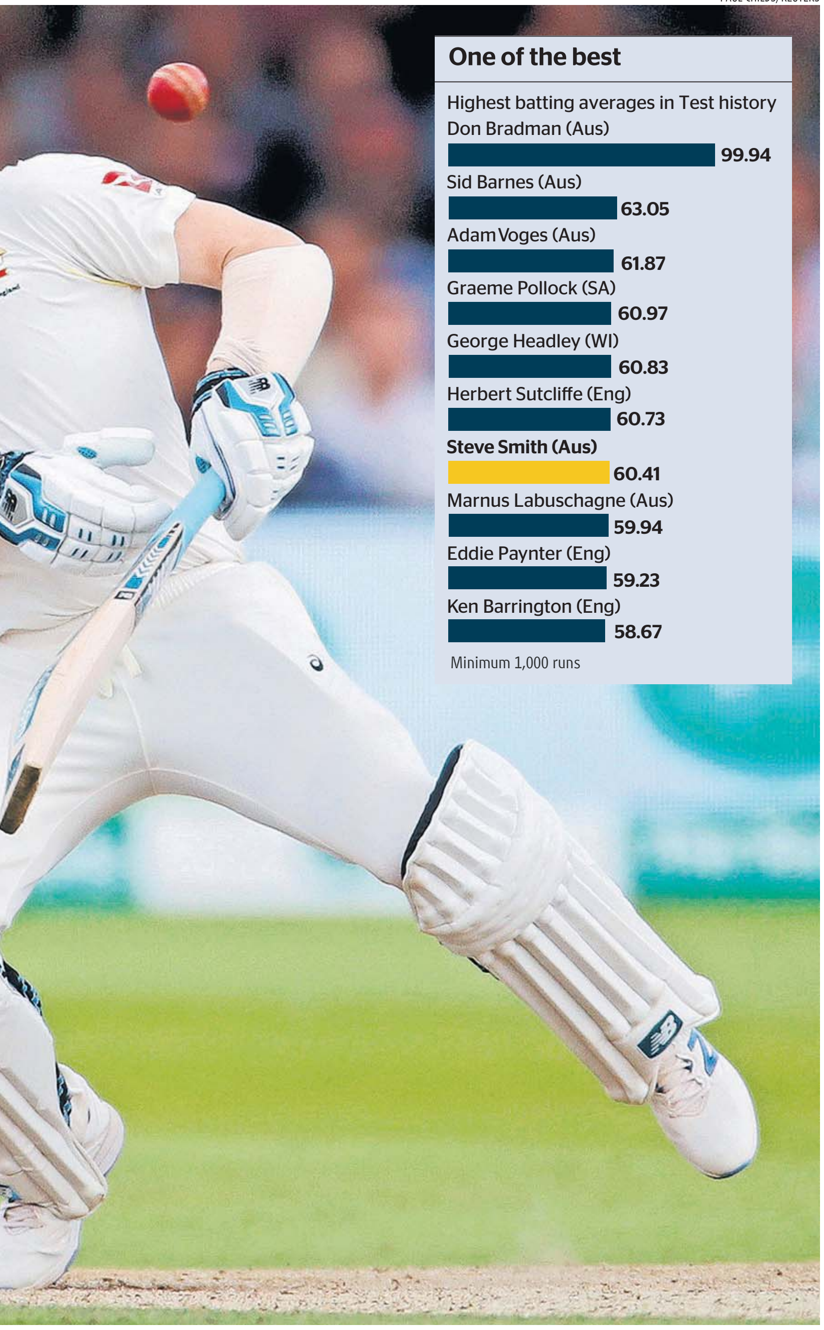
With the conditions in New Zealand favouring seam bowlers, England will take Jack Leach as their sole specialist spinner. The England management feel Ahmed would be better served playing for a T20 franchise rather than carrying drinks for the Test team.

The 15-man Test squad is likely to include Stuart Broad, who missed the Pakistan tour on paternity leave. There will be no changes to the batting line-up, with Jonny Bairstow set to miss the rest of the winter because of the freak leg injury he suffered playing golf in October.



Archer has not played for England since March 2021

PAUL CHILDS/REUTERS



of the Test, after being hit on the head by Archer at Lord's during the 2019 Ashes

but by staying more side-on it allows him to do so and to access the areas in front of square on the leg side, as well as those behind. He can extend his arms more easily, not getting them cramped up, the most common fault seen in attempting pull shots.

Smith's general leg-side play is better now too, because he has a wider area in which he can score. Before, his technique just took the ball to certain places; now he has the control to hit it where he wants. It is a crucial difference.

"When I'm whipping them off my legs through wide mid-on, or pulling the ball through mid-wicket, in front of square, I know that I'm getting myself in good positions and I'm side-on," Smith said. "I think if I'm able to pull the ball through mid-wicket, the bowler has to bowl either a little fuller or a bit shorter. It just gives me a lot more scoring opportunities."

That unbeaten 80, off 78 balls, against England in Adelaide was the moment that he felt his hard work (any technical change requires hours and hours of often frustrating practice) was at last coming to fruition.

"I've been working on a few things, it's almost been a six-month or 12-month process," he said. "I feel like I'm staying a bit more side-on now and I've got my feet and hands in sync together. This was probably the first time I've actually had extended time in the middle with that change.

"It was probably the best I've felt in about six years. I was just in really nice positions and I felt good. We're always looking for perfection, and for me that was as close to perfection as I will get."

Wow. That is quite scary, even if not entirely surprising from one who has always been known as one of cricket's great problem-solvers. A double century against West Indies in Perth, the fourth of his Test career among 29 centuries (the same number of centuries as Bradman), confirmed that Smith is mightily comfortable with his tweaked method.

Wickets fell at a rate in the most recent Test against South Africa on a Gabba pitch that was ludicrously green, but even then Smith made a first-innings score of 36 that was bettered by only three other players in a comedically quick two-day Test, stroking his first ball of the match through extra cover off the left-armer Marco Jansen for an all-run four with much of that "I'm back baby" style.

As O'Donnell says, "He's gone back and said, 'I'm not a good enough player.' He's literally made himself a different player, it's extraordinary."

It is indeed. It is undoubtedly something to look forward to next summer. Smith's average in 32 Tests against England is 59.69, but, if you take out the Tests before his technical change at Perth in 2013, it rises to an astonishing 72.94 in 22 Tests.

And if you think English conditions may hamper him, then the chilling reality is that he averages 65.08 overall in England in 14 Tests, but that goes up to an absurdly good 80.12 in nine Tests since that 2013 change.

What will this latest change bring? It will be utterly fascinating, as will discovering the plans the inventive McCullum and Stokes have for him.

Brook in demand and big bucks for Curran – guide to IPL auction

Elizabeth Ammon

WHEN AND WHERE?
Today in Kochi. It begins at 9am UK time and is expected to last for most of the day.

HOW DOES THE AUCTION WORK?
A total of 405 players are available for the ten franchises to bid on — 273 from India and 132 from overseas. A maximum of 87 players, of which only 30 can be non-Indian, will be bought at the auction to fill the open spots at each of the franchises. Each team can have a minimum of 18 players and a maximum of 25, with eight overseas players in the squad.

WHICH ENGLISH PLAYERS HAVE BEEN RETAINED BY THEIR FRANCHISES?
Seven players were confirmed as having been retained by their franchises earlier this year: Moeen Ali, Mark Wood, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Liam Livingstone, Jos Buttler and David Willey.

WHICH ENGLISH PLAYERS ARE UP FOR AUCTION?
There are 27 English players in the auction. In the top price bracket are the all-rounders, Sam Curran and Ben Stokes, and the list also includes Joe Root, who last entered the auction in 2018, when he went unsold.

Yorkshire's Harry Brook is likely to attract some attention after his successful winter both at the T20 World Cup and in the recent Test series in Pakistan, and the 18-year-old leg spinner Rehan Ahmed has been talked up by the England Test head coach Brendon McCullum, who believes an IPL stint would be beneficial to the teenager's development. Other English names include Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Dawid Malan, Jason Roy, Will Smeed, Will Jacks, Reece Topley and Chris Jordan. Sam Billings and Chris Woakes both withdrew from the auction to concentrate on playing in the County Championship early in the English summer, with the hope of getting into the team for the Ashes.



Curran has previously turned out for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL

WHO IS LIKELY TO FETCH THE HIGHEST PRICE?
There is a lot of noise around Curran, who is set to spark a serious bidding war having been named player of the tournament at the recent T20 World Cup, and the Surrey all-rounder could become the most expensive player in IPL history. Stokes, who did not play in this year's tournament, is also expected to attract a great deal of interest, as he will be available for all of the 2023 tournament.

DOES THE TOURNAMENT CLASH WITH ANY ENGLAND MATCHES NEXT SUMMER AND WILL ENGLISH PLAYERS BE ABLE TO PLAY THE WHOLE TOURNAMENT?
The exact dates are yet to be confirmed but the 2023 edition will run from the end of March until at least the end of May — there are 74 matches in total. The IPL is given a two-month window and is likely to be completed in time for England and Australia players to join their national teams to prepare for the Ashes, which begins on June 16. The BCCI, the Indian board, has confirmed that players from both countries will be available for the whole tournament, which may mean some will miss England's Test against Ireland at Lord's from June 1 to 4.

Rob Key, the ECB's managing director of men's cricket, and McCullum both see immense value in their players taking part in the IPL.



‘Mourinho and Eddie tinker a lot – it doesn’t always work’

Steve Diamond reflects with **John Westerby** on Worcester’s demise and why he prefers simplicity of Guardiola’s approach

JON SUPER FOR THE TIMES



Diamond, who is taking an intensive French course, believes he must broaden his horizons after losing his job as director of rugby when Worcester collapsed

Steve Diamond has surprised himself in the past few weeks, since Worcester Warriors went bust and he lost his job as director of rugby, and he has been working out what to do next. “I’ve always got up at 5.30am, but it feels bizarre at the moment because I don’t need to do that,” he says. “So I’ve been getting up at 7am and actually quite enjoying it, which I didn’t think I would, because there’s no substitute for getting up and working hard. But I know there’ll be a time soon when I’m getting up at half-past five again, so I’ll enjoy it for a short while.”

Without a rugby club to run, he has been doing the school run with his six-year-old daughter, Evie, and has embarked on an intensive French course, with a Top 14 club among the employment options he has been discussing, as well as opportunities in the United States — although, as someone who has coached Russia, he knows fluency is not a prerequisite for communicating your vision to a group of players.

“I went to Russia with no Russian, I learnt a bit of the language and we got to the World Cup for the first time ever [in 2011],” Diamond, 54, says. “The clubs who are looking at me now will probably be in the mire and the first thing I’d need to do is to get them out of the mire.

“That takes nous, rugby knowledge and leadership. You don’t need the language down to a tee, you can speak Swahili and deliver that message. Look at Mick Lynch [of the RMT union]. Do I agree with his policies? Do I bollocks. But he’s clear, concise and to the point. If you’re earning £40,000 and he’s your union leader, you’ll do anything for him.”

Given his own time of recent industrial strife, as Worcester’s dire financial situation sent them into the abyss, Diamond was a galvanising figure. He has a reputation as a combative coach, but his ability to unite people behind a common cause was clear. While frustration and anger built with the mismanagement of the owners, as pay packets failed to materialise, a defiant collective spirit was fostered among those faced with the loss of their jobs.

It may be that Diamond’s next job is back at the same place. Last Friday the consortium he has fronted with Adam Hewitt, whose agricultural machinery firm was Warriors’ title sponsor, found itself back in contention to fund a relaunch of the club when the previous preferred bidders were rejected by the RFU.

Administrators are now looking at other bids, with a decision expected in the next month. “We’ve got a very rigorous, structured plan,” Diamond says. “We’d have a couple of years in the Championship to regroup, working with the RFU’s Midlands academy to build ourselves a young team that, in two or three years, can get back up to the Premiership.

“The Worcester people are really passionate. With the crowds they get, I felt I could get a highly competitive mid-table team, which I’ve done with pretty much every team I’ve had, with relatively few resources. Hopefully something good can come of it and Worcester can rise again.”

Speaking at home in Cheshire, Diamond is in a reflective mood. On October 5, after weeks of angst, every employee at Worcester was made redundant, less than a year after Diamond had joined. A Gallagher Premiership regular, with a small but committed fanbase and an enviable stadium at Sixways, suddenly ceased to exist.

At what point did reality dawn on the staff? “We were all a bit blind to what we were being told [by the owners] and what was going on,” Diamond says. “When it really hit me was when Fergus Lee-Warner [the flanker] flew over with all his furniture from Australia … and then that month we didn’t get paid. That’s when I realised that the proverbial might be hitting the fan.

“Nick Easter [the defence coach] had relocated from Northumberland and bought a house in Cheltenham. I’d bought a house there myself. Dez [Chris Derrick], the kitman, he’d been a player there, he’d been there when Cecil Duckworth first took it on 25 years ago. The sadness is that it was on my watch that he lost his job.

“There was just a lot of sadness. There were lots of fond memories as well — [such as] winning the Premiership Cup last season. Goodness knows where that trophy is these days …”

Did he think that the RFU could have done more to prevent the collapse, with Wasps following Worcester out of business two weeks later? “It’s easy after the event,” he says. “There should have been checks and balances in place. Because they’re private businesses, it’s difficult for the authorities to jump in; nobody wants to be handcuffed. But certainly when the clubs are being bought, there needs to be more in place.

“Some good governance will come out of this. It shook everybody in rugby. We’d been living in a bit of a false bubble for 25 years.”

How did the crisis affect him personally? This is not a question he answers readily, preferring to talk about the effect on those whose lives were upended, and the satisfaction he has taken in seeing many of the Worcester players find new clubs. Eventually he talks about how he approached such a traumatic period. “I’ve never actually had a conversation with anybody about it, how I dealt with it,” he says. “I’m always positive enough to know that if nobody knocks on my door, I’m going to knock on theirs, that something will come along.

“But there’s a lot of stuff stored up, a lot of stuff ready to come out in the next job. When the bad times come, I’m a bit insular. It’s probably not a great thing, but that’s how I deal with it. I know I have this persona: that I’m Marmite, you either love me or hate me, and I hate that. As a leader, you are a bit of an actor, you have an image. Possibly after Worcester, people will understand a bit more what I’m about.”

It is two years this month since Diamond’s eight-year stay at Sale Sharks, the club for whom he had played as a hooker, ended for personal reasons, and the Worcester experience has reminded him of the fragility of the profession. Hence the French course, hence his continued business interests away from the game. “Everybody’s telling me the Premiership will be going down to ten teams,” he says. “Well, I’ve worked at three of the clubs and there’s probably five that don’t like me, so I’ve got to broaden my horizons.”

In a broader sense he thinks there is a danger that too many rugby coaches are becoming dependent on analysis, and that such an approach contributed to Eddie Jones’s downfall as England head coach. “Sometimes rugby thinks it’s baseball and has gone too far towards *Moneyball*,” he says. “Analysts are really important,

> Good governance will come out of this disaster. We’d been living in a false bubble

but they’re only maybe 20 per cent of your preparation. The science is that you need a set of big lads who can get you quick front-foot ball. You can only analyse the opposition so much.

“I’ve watched Pep Guardiola coach. It’s precise, it’s thoughtful, but it’s simple, and they don’t try to change too much every week. [José] Mourinho is different, because he was an analyst, he’ll change things each week according to the opposition, but the players aren’t always capable of doing that, and I think that’s what Eddie does. I put a sign up at Sale saying, ‘90 per cent us, 10 per cent them.’ Let’s worry about ourselves.”

Diamond’s strengths, he believes, are in bringing a squad together and assembling a group of coaches. “I left Sale in a good place,” he says. “Alex Sanderson has come in and enhanced it, and I think they’ll win the league in the next couple of years.”

Once he has found the right people, he believes honesty and loyalty can take a team a long way. “You can’t go far wrong in life if you play a straight bat,” he says. “If you don’t tell lies, you don’t bullshit, and you’re not incompetent, you’re generally all right.

“I think leadership is that you look after other people first. Don’t get me wrong, I demand that back, in bucketloads. But maybe I did a bit of that at Worcester by looking after people, and some folk realised, ‘He’s all right at what he does.’ ”

Officials told to make quicker decisions

CONTINUED FROM BACK

case. In addition, competitions such as the forthcoming Six Nations in February and March will be urged to introduce a shot clock for kickers, counting down the 90 seconds allocated for a conversion and 60 seconds for a penalty kick at goal.

Analysis by The Times in the aftermath of the 2020 Six Nations revealed that kickers were regularly exceeding the permitted time, with all ten of Owen Farrell’s penalty kicks for England in that competition taking longer than 60 seconds, which should have resulted in a scrum being awarded to the opposition.

That lost time, combined with regular scrum resets and other delays, contributed to the 80-minute Tests having an actual “ball-in-play” time of about 36 minutes.

“World Rugby, member unions and competitions will work with broadcasters and hosts to implement on-screen [in stadiums and in broadcasts] shot clocks for penalties and conversions to ensure referees, players and fans can view the countdown,” Phil Davies, World Rugby’s director of rugby, said.

Match officials have been told to be more sparing in their consultations with the TMO and make quicker decisions after being reminded that replays are for “identifying and ensuring clear and obvious offences”.

Existing limitations on the numbers and interventions of water-carriers have been deemed a success, but they will now be permitted to enter the field only when a try is scored.

Hansen keen to tackle Jones

Steve Hansen is relishing the prospect of another meeting with Eddie Jones next year when he takes charge of a World XV at Twickenham.

The 63-year-old former New Zealand coach, who last locked horns with his Australian rival when losing to England in their 2019 World Cup semi-final, will pick an invitational team to face the Barbarians on May 28 — Jones’s first coaching task since he was sacked by England this month.

“You relish every chance to go against Eddie,” Hansen said. “We’ve known each other for a long, long time and he’s a good rugby man.

“With Eddie, you’ve got to expect the unexpected, because one of his great attributes is his ability to analyse the opposition and set traps for them. He’s a great planner, that’s why he’s been so successful with so many sides in different World Cups, having won one [as technical advisor] with South Africa.

“He’ll want to come to Twickenham and play a good brand of rugby, and he’ll want to win too, because he’s a pretty competitive bloke.”

Sinfield cannot fail to inspire

John Westerby







Sinfield, above, is greeted by Burrow after completing his gruelling 101-mile run from Leicester to Leeds in under 24 hours and, inset, he receives a special award recognising his fundraising efforts

The speech that Kevin Sinfield gave at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year (Spoty) ceremony on Wednesday night, having received a special award recognising his fundraising efforts for his friend, Rob Burrow, offered a glimpse of the qualities that earned him the job as England's new defence coach this week.

During his long and hugely successful playing career with Leeds Rhinos, which made him the most decorated player in the sport's history, lining up alongside Burrow and captaining a team that won seven Super League titles, Sinfield's leadership qualities were the stuff of rugby league legend.

As a goal-kicking loose forward, he was one of the great players, unquestionably. But it was the effect he had on those around him, inspiring team-mates to greater deeds and lifting the collective way beyond the sum of its parts, that really marked Sinfield apart. Any team in which he played was improved by more than just his playmaking abilities.

Now those qualities are being seen by a much wider audience through his astonishing fundraising efforts for the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) community, which have been inspired by Burrow, the diminutive scrum half, who was diagnosed with the condition three years ago, only two years after completing his own remarkable playing career with an eighth Super League title.

In December 2020, Sinfield ran seven marathons in seven days. A year later, he ran 101 miles in less than 24 hours, from Leicester to Leeds. Last month, he went further still, running seven ultra-marathons in seven days — approximately 300 miles in total, from Edinburgh to Manchester — and he has now raised more than £5 million to support those suffering with MND and to fund research into a cure. The No 7 common to all his efforts reflects the number Burrow wore on his back as a Leeds Rhinos player.

In his latest effort, he started at Murrayfield, where he was joined by Doddie Weir, the former Scotland rugby player who died from MND only two weeks later. Sinfield also stopped off at Headingley, where he shared an embrace with Burrow, and finished by entering Old Trafford at half-time during the Rugby League World Cup final. At all times, the ingenious plotting of the route was designed to give his efforts the broadest possible appeal to maximise opportunities to raise funds.

In his speech at Spoty, Sinfield spoke, as ever, about the fundraising being a team effort, with a deep love for Burrow and his family at its heart.

"Rob's probably the most inspirational bloke in the UK at this moment in time," Sinfield said. "He's inspired us all to be better friends. I think in sport, and certainly in rugby, the connections you make throughout your playing career — the friends, the team-mates — it doesn't just stop when the whistle blows."

One word that cropped up time and again in Sinfield's speech was "community", both in reference to those touched by MND and sport's ability to bring whole communities together and give them a sense of purpose. This has always been at the centre of Sinfield's own motivation as the son of trade union activists from Oldham, where he still lives.

Whatever he could achieve for himself and his team, he wanted the feelgood factor to spread way beyond the sporting arena.

"What sport gives you, and rugby in particular, is powerful enough to bring communities together and to provide hope," he said.

It is those qualities that Steve Borthwick, the new England head coach, wanted to engage by bringing Sinfield first to Leicester Tigers and now to the national team.

Sinfield had never coached full-time before, having returned to Rhinos as a director of rugby, an administrative role that he did not enjoy. Seeing Burrow's struggles made him determined to push himself towards new experiences, so he crossed codes to join the Tigers as defence coach and helped them to win the Gallagher Premiership title at the end of his first season.

The impact that Sinfield had at Tigers was felt not simply in terms of their defensive organisation. It was the way he lifted the culture, the environment and the community of the club as a whole.

When Borthwick was announced as the successor to Eddie Jones at Twickenham this week, this was the reasoning he gave for making Sinfield England's defence coach.

"In the best teams I played in and coached, the players work so hard for each other, they cover for each other, help each other, celebrate with each other and lift each other up when they get knocked down," Borthwick said. "They're so tight and if there's a person that embodies that ethos, it's Kevin Sinfield. He's the type of person you want in your environment. Kevin is an incredible coach. He's an even better human being."

Benetton ban player after Secret Santa banana 'gift'

Mark Palmer

Benetton have suspended an unidentified player after Ellis Genge, of Bristol Bears, demanded they take action over the rotten banana that was given to Cherif Traorè as a Secret Santa "gift".

Although Traorè, the 16-cap prop who was born in Guinea, said on Wednesday that he had accepted an apology from the full squad as well as the individual in question, Benetton received widespread criticism for having failed to detail what, if any, disciplinary action would be taken.

Genge, the England prop, strongly criticised the Treviso-based club's response. The 27-year-old wrote on Twitter: "If there is no further action on this from Benetton then everything we've done for 'rugby against racism' has been a tick-box for most."

Paolo Odogwu, the 25-year-old former Wasps back who is now with Stade Français and is qualified to play for Italy, echoed Genge's criticism, highlighting that Traorè had been the one to front the video with which Benetton addressed the episode on social media. "Crazy lack of accountability here," Odogwu said. "Doesn't feel much like 'family' making the person who has already suffered do the PR."

Later on Thursday, the United Rugby Championship (URC) — the league in which Benetton compete — released a statement ordering the club to take action against anyone involved.

A joint statement was then issued by Benetton and the Italian rugby federation, FIR. It confirmed that the "federal prosecutor" who oversees the union's activities would lead an investigation "to establish the facts as well as responsibility" and that a player has been suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

The federal prosecutor is Fabio Pennisi, a Rome-based lawyer who specialises in sports law. Benetton and Zebre, Italy's other URC team, have also pledged to further educate their players about inclusion.

The incident came to light on Wednesday morning when Traorè described on social media his disgust, and the hurt he felt, when "most" of his team-mates laughed at the incident.

Benetton called an emergency meeting of players and staff that afternoon, after which Traorè said he had accepted the apologies.

Arsenal set sights on £80m Mudryk

Football
Gary Jacob

Mikel Arteta is ready to spend heavily to ensure that Arsenal's title challenge is not derailed by injuries, notably to Gabriel Jesus, his main striker.

Arteta, the Arsenal manager, has stepped up his pursuit of Mykhailo Mudryk, the 21-year-old winger valued by Shakhtar Donetsk at £80 million, after he travelled to meet the club's American owners before the team's training camp in Dubai this month. Mudryk, a Ukraine international, has 14 league goal contributions and five in the Champions League this season.

Arsenal are five points clear at the top of the Premier League but could be missing five players when they host West Ham United on Boxing Day. They fear that Jesus, who has scored five goals and contributed six assists since signing from Manchester City in the summer, could be out for three months after knee surgery, leaving Eddie Nketiah as the only recognised centre forward. Oleksandr Zinchenko, Takehiro Tomiyasu, Emile Smith Rowe and Reiss Nelson all have injuries.

"We are going to be active and active means we are looking to strengthen the team," he said. "This squad still doesn't have the luxury of not maximising every single window."



Jesus may be out of action for the next three months

Arsenal have spent approaching a net £300 million in the past three summers but have the financial flexibility to commit again after reducing their wage bill. Nine of Arsenal's squad have already played more than 1,000 minutes in the league this season, more than any other side, and Arteta has made only 11 changes to his starting XI in the previous 13 matches — the fewest changes in the top flight.

William Saliba has started every league match and is scheduled to return to training today after playing for 27 minutes in one substitute appearance for France. Arteta suggested that the central defender could start alongside Gabriel against West Ham.

Arsenal will not rush into letting Cédric Soares, the full back, join Fulham until they are happy with their options in January. They are also trying to finalise new contracts for Gabriel Martinelli and Bukayo Saka, who are expected to be given pay rises that push them close to the top earners, Thomas Partey and Jesus, who both get more than £150,000 a week.

Tottenham line up January move for £13.5m-rated Rabiot

Gary Jacob

Tottenham Hotspur are trying to sign Adrien Rabiot before his deal expires in the summer.

Juventus fear that the France midfielder has decided that he wants to move to the Premier League and have told Spurs that he will cost about £13.5 million. Rabiot, 27, helped to anchor France's midfield on their way to the World Cup final on Sunday, missing only one match due to illness.

He has been offered to Tottenham and Arsenal, among others, by his mother, Veronique, who is also his agent. Tottenham have maintained a long-standing interest in Rabiot from his days playing for Paris Saint-Germain and their efforts could be helped by their close relationship with Juventus. Fabio Paratici, the Tottenham managing director, spent 11 years at Juventus and signed Dejan Kulusevski and Rodrigo Bentancur from the Italian side in January. Paratici also signed Rabiot as a free agent in 2019 after the midfielder had spent nine years at PSG.

Antonio Conte, the Spurs head coach, has put pressure on the club to back him with experienced players in the transfer window after qualifying for the Champions League knock-out stage, where Spurs will meet AC Milan in February. The Italian has said that he cannot work "a miracle" and wants an attacking player, a midfielder and a defender, having missed out on many of his summer targets. Tottenham's summer net spend was about £120 million.

Spurs have also been linked with Pedro Porro, the Sporting wing back.

Matt Dickinson

Senior Sports Writer



How Brighton handle an overnight star

How do you make plans for someone whose life has transformed overnight? For a footballer suddenly propelled from a bit of renown into global recognition?

That challenge has never been more joyously embraced than at Brighton & Hove Albion, a club that woke up on Monday in thrilled wonderment that, in Alexis Mac Allister, they had a world champion in the ranks.

Turning up to work on the morning after the epic World Cup final the day before, Brighton staff found posters celebrating Mac Allister's success already displayed around the stadium in offices, corridors, changing rooms. The whole place was buzzing. Did you see Alexis's performance? Do you think he will let us see his medal? Perhaps even touch it?

To those who had experienced the club's lowest ebb — Brighton entered the 21st century in the fourth tier, having finished 91st of 92 professional clubs under Steve Gritt a couple of years earlier — this was a celebration so unimaginable that it felt surreal.

Glee for Mac Allister was, above all, deep and genuine for a popular team-mate and colleague. "A great professional and a lovely guy," Paul Barber, the club's chief executive, says. "It says everything of Alexis that, looking at the Argentina team shots on the pitch, even after the massive role he played in the final, including [being named] man of the match on the BBC, he was tucked away at the back. That's the type of person he is."

At 23, Mac Allister had his own fulfilment as a midfielder who started the tournament on the bench but came to be integral for Argentina in every game thereafter; a cult hero in my house this past month for the way he stood out for the Celtic name and look; for how he grabbed attention with unwavering relentlessness in midfield; ultimately, for what it said about football's possibilities that a Brighton player was trading passes with Lionel Messi and excelling in one of the most notable games of football ever staged.

What a story! Argentina's second goal against France, a sublime passing move that swept up the pitch like an unstoppable tide, finished with a charging Mac Allister supplying the perfect crossfield pass that demanded a finish from Ángel Di María. Mesmerising. Brilliant.

Mac Allister had his crowning moment but the club could take pride in their boldness to have signed a player, with some risk attached in January 2019, still finding his feet.

In a market like Argentina, where the Premier League's top six clubs as well as Spain's big two are so well connected, Brighton have to be ahead of the game. They bought Mac Allister on potential and sent him on loan back to Argentinos Juniors and then Boca Juniors, trusting that he would continue to develop. They had to be shrewd to get their man, persuading Mac Allister not just with the prospect of a move to England but with research. Paul Winstanley, then head of recruitment, sat down with the player and his family in Buenos Aires to go through data the club had amassed to show why they had faith in him.

After his move to England came work under Graham Potter, then the manager, to develop his range over a couple of seasons; the shift from a ten who could play eight to an eight who could also play six, which has stepped up under Potter's successor, Roberto De Zerbi, who has deployed Mac Allister alongside Moisés Caicedo, of Ecuador. What value now for a central midfield bought for a combined £11 million?

Mac Allister's stats back up his impressive versatility given that, heading into the World Cup, he ranked third in the top division this season for winning back possession in central areas, surpassed only by Declan Rice and Rodri, and fifth across any position for tackles, according to Sky Sports data. Yet he also ranked behind only Kevin De Bruyne for shots from outside the penalty area.

Five Premier League goals in this campaign have included penalties and a direct free kick, marking his seniority as well as his nerve and technique. His haul might have been six if his thunderous strike against Leicester City had not been harshly ruled out by VAR for an offside.

Lionel Scaloni, the Argentina head coach, had evidently been watching more closely than most as he brought Mac Allister into the national team during 2022 but, still, no one could have imagined all that unfolded in Qatar.

Not even his most ardent fan at Brighton had him down as starring in a World Cup final, though, with admirable forethought, the club gave Mac Allister a new contract in October, in case he did catch the eye during the tournament. What a smart piece of work that now looks, with his value many times the initial £7 million investment and speculation rife about which rich club may submit a bid.

Now everyone knows the red-bearded midfielder — just don't call him "Ginger". Mac Allister revealed before the tournament how he hated the nickname he had been given among his Argentina team-mates. He told Messi, who put the word around. No one has dared to call him *Colo* since.

The looks come down his father's side — a photo of Mac Allister's dad, Carlos, in the jersey of Boca has more than a touch of Alex McLeish about it — with ancestry through a Scottish and Irish family who emigrated to Argentina in the 19th century. Football is the most significant inheritance. Carlos, himself the son of a footballer, played alongside Diego Maradona to help Argentina to qualify for the 1994 World Cup. Carlos never made the tournament but he did travel to Qatar, along with two other sons, Kevin and Francis, who are footballers at Boca and Rosario Central respectively. Mac Allister's father is said to be a steady, grounding influence.

So what happens next? An unprecedented mid-season World Cup has accentuated the challenges of reintegration, whether that is the ecstasy of a Mac Allister, Harry Kane's deflation or injury in the case of Gabriel Jesus. Aston Villa's Emíliano Martinez, the goalkeeping hero of Argentina's triumph, gives the impression that he may spend the rest of his life delirious with joy.

At Brighton, they discussed among executives, sports psychologists and the manager how much slack to give their new world champion. Dragging back a player who has just won the World Cup to rapturous acclaim, who turns 24 on Saturday, with the chance to spend a rare Christmas among family and a nation brimming with goodwill, seemed daft. They trust that a conscientious player, who has already sent word that he looks forward to bringing in his medal, will return in the right frame of mind after a couple of weeks off. They fully expect his work ethic to endure beyond this glory.

Brighton could certainly have done with Mac Allister in midweek, when they felt the bump to earth of losing on penalties to Charlton Athletic in the Carabao Cup, but the fans will be marking the feat for a while yet. "We've won the World Cup," they sang.

The tournament brought the glorious coronation of Messi but the story of Mac Allister added a different sort of intrigue, which propels us into the imminent resumption of the Premier League. What more to expect from him given the inevitability of fresh scrutiny, fascination, transfer rumours?

At Brighton, they feel some of the reflected glow of a wonderful achievement but also know how the business works. Talent must be found, developed and replenished.

In that respect they will be joined from Rosario Central next month by Facundo Buonanotte, regarded as such a talent that, at 18, he will come straight into the first-team group. It is a punt on a young Argentinian but, well, these things can turn out spectacularly.

RODRIGO ABD/AP







Fans in Buenos Aires hail the World Cup-winning Argentina players, including Mac Allister, inset left, whose father, Carlos, played alongside Maradona, above

Coventry accept potential points deduction over pitch

Coventry City have accepted a five-point deduction, suspended until the end of next season, as punishment for the club's postponed home games against Rotherham United, Wigan Athletic and Huddersfield Town.

The Sky Bet Championship fixtures were unable to go ahead because the pitch at the Coventry Building Society Arena was in an unsafe and unplayable condition.

Coventry will immediately be docked points should they be found responsible for any further missed fixtures before the end of next season.

The Sky Blues will also pay compensation to the three divisional rivals affected by the postponements as part of the sanctions, in addition to covering EFL costs of £6,000.

Coventry chief executive Dave Boddy blamed debt-ridden rugby club Wasps, who also use the stadium and are in the process of being taken over after entering administration, for the poor condition of the pitch.

Forest shirts to support United Nations charity

Nottingham Forest's men's and women's teams will have the "UK for UNHCR" logo displayed on the front of their shirts for the rest of the season after the Premier League club announced a partnership with the United Nations refugee agency. As part of the agreement, Forest have made a financial donation and will support relief efforts for people who are fleeing conflict and persecution around the world.

James's brace puts Chelsea top

Women's Champions League
Molly Hudson

This time last year Chelsea had crashed out of the Champions League and were dealing with a Covid outbreak. Last night they celebrated finishing top of group A in front of 10,000 fans at Stamford Bridge.

Despite having already sealed qualification to the quarter-finals in the last round, they were in no mood for complacency and powered to a 3-0 victory, inspired by the excellent Lauren James.

Paris Saint-Germain had promised a "full-on attack" but Sarah Bouhaddi, in goal, could not stop Sam Kerr's strike into the top corner from just outside the box. Kerr's one-touch pass to James then created Chelsea's second.

James, 21, scored the third with a clinical finish from a Fran Kirby pull-back. Chelsea will find out their quarter-final opponents on February 10.

'If ACL crisis affected likes of Messi more would be done'

Beth Mead wants an inquiry into why so many female footballers are injuring their ACLs, writes **Martyn Ziegler**

Beth Mead has called on football's authorities to launch a detailed investigation into why so many top female players have suffered anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries — and claimed that such a research project would already be in progress had male stars been affected to the same degree.

Mead, the 27-year-old Arsenal forward, won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year (Spoty) award for her goals which took England to glory at the European Championship finals in the summer. However, she is facing a long spell out of the game after rupturing an ACL during a match against Manchester United last month and says she wants to use her recovery time to take part in research. She has concerns that the packed schedule could be a factor in the number of such injuries.

Her partner and Arsenal team-mate, Vivianne Miedema, 26, suffered the same injury last week during a Champions League game against Lyon — making it ten senior Women's Super League players sidelined with ACL problems among the 12 teams.

Five of the top 16 players on the 2022 Ballon d'Or women's award shortlist have torn an ACL — Alexia Putellas, the winner, Catarina Macario and Marie-Antoinette Katoto, plus Mead and Miedema. All three winners since the women's award was launched in 2018 have had an ACL injury at some point, with Ada Hegerberg and Megan Rapinoe also sidelined for long spells. It has been estimated that women can be up to six times more likely to suffer ACL injuries than their male counterparts taking part in the same sports.

Sarina Wiegman, the England women's manager, has backed Mead's call for a detailed study, pointing out that men's and women's physiology is different, and has called on Fifa and Uefa to get involved.

Mead, who has not given up hope of recovering in time for the World Cup next summer, said: "Look at the top Ballon d'Or players who have done it [torn an ACL]. I see myself as quite a robust player but this has still happened. You look at Viv, she's a robust player and we've not been players generally hit with injuries.

"I think if that happened with [Lionel] Messi, [Cristiano] Ronaldo, [Antoine] Griezmann, then probably there is going to be a lot more done.

"It's something that needs to be looked into, and Viv and I would like to get involved. It would be a positive use of our time. Unfortunately this has happened to us but hopefully it can kick somebody up the arse to go on and start doing something."

Mead believes the demands being placed upon modern players could be contributing to the issue. "The scheduling could be a lot better," she said. "We won the Euros and a couple of weeks later we are back into camp again. We do it because it's our job and we love what we do but at the same time we need to look after players a lot better."

Miedema, the Holland forward, has written off her chances of making the World Cup, which takes place in Australia and New Zealand in July and August, but Mead, who was the top scorer and player of the tournament at the Euros, is refusing to do so.

"I'm two weeks post-op now and I'm in a really good position," she said. "It's difficult to put a timestamp on it with this injury because you can wake up one morning, it's stiff and you can't do anything. Another morning you feel you could run on the pitch. I will work my arse off in the gym to get myself in the best possible position for next year."

Wiegman, who was the first woman to be named coach of the year at Spoty, also called for a reform of the schedule. "The FA is investigating it," she said. "The demands of the game on the top players are getting higher and higher. They need some rest. We have to find a way because we get too many injuries.

"There's lots of research in the men's game, not the women's game. Women are built differently to men; the hips and the knees are different, the angles are different."

The FA said its monitoring programme has shown ACL injuries represent 1.3 per cent of the total number of injuries in the top two tiers of women's football in England, with hamstring injuries the most common at 11 per cent. A spokesman said: "We will continue with our injury and illness surveillance work, which will give us important medical insight into women's football."

DAVID DAVIES/PA



Mead, left, and her partner Miedema on the red carpet at the Spoty awards

Q&A

Women are more vulnerable to an ACL injury but what is an ACL?
An ACL is the anterior cruciate ligament in the knee. It is a tough band of tissue joining the thigh bone to the shin bone at the knee joint. It runs diagonally through the inside of the knee and gives the knee joint stability.

What is the prognosis?
The most common injury to an ACL is a tear or rupture. This requires surgery and can rule out an athlete for up to a year. Elite athletes can have surgery once the swelling has gone down through private medical insurance. The wait on the NHS for a grassroots player with a ruptured ACL can be years.

Are there differences between men's and women's ACLs?
While research is scant it is thought the biological differences between men and women make females six times more likely to injure their ACL. This is because women's hips are wider, so the angle at which their knee plants in the ground is different. Women tend to have less muscle mass in the knee, which means it is more likely to overstretch, while the early stages of the menstrual cycle can make ligaments laxer and therefore more vulnerable to rupture.

How can it be prevented?
Prevention is the key — there is no medical "cure" as such, but prehabilitation is used by the top clubs. This varies from monitoring players' menstrual cycles to lower the intensity of training when they are most vulnerable, to strength and conditioning work around the muscles in the knee and the glutes. In recent months, "player load" — the amount of games and high-intensity work — has been highlighted as another concern.

Why do we need more research?
As with many areas of women's sport, the research conducted is small-scale and limited. Female players are taking part in an unprecedented number of games at present, requiring a physical output that is higher than ever. We simply do not know the effect this has on ACLs and other injuries in women.
By Molly Hudson

France seethes over Martínez's 'detestable' mocking of Mbappé

Adam Sage Paris

Emiliano Martínez has caused anger in France for repeatedly mocking Kylian Mbappé after Argentina's win over France in the World Cup final.

In the dressing room after his side's victory on penalties on Sunday, Martínez, the Aston Villa goalkeeper, was filmed announcing a "minute's silence for Kylian Mbappé, who is dead".

During Argentina's victory parade through Buenos Aires, the 30-year-old held a doll with a photograph of the France forward stuck on its face. At one point he was filmed rubbing the doll against his genitalia. He had made the same gesture with the Golden Glove award that he received in Qatar after being declared the best goalkeeper at the World Cup.

Martínez won plaudits for his performances in the tournament, notably in the final where he made a critical save in the final minute of extra time and then kept out Kingsley Coman's penalty in the shoot-out. In France, however, his actions have generated a mixture of perplexity and anger. "Why are Argentinian players so detestable?" read the headline in Le Parisien, the French capital's daily newspaper.

"During the World Cup and after their victory against France … Lionel Messi's team-mates have multiplied all kinds of provocations," the newspaper said, adding that Martínez was the "symbol of a team that regularly oversteps the mark".

Commentators also pointed out that the Argentina players had scarcely acted with grace after their victory over Holland in the quarter-final.

Fabien Archambault, professor of contemporary history at the Sorbonne University in Paris, told Le Parisien that in Argentina's football culture "there is a will to mock, to win and even to humiliate the opponents".

He added: "The Argentinians don't have the impression they are going too far because that's how they approach football on a day-to-day basis."



Martínez holding the doll that had an image of Mbappé stuck on its face

Le Figaro, the centre-right daily, devoted a lengthy article to Martínez, who has become something of a pantomime villain in France. "His celebrations have not been an example of sobriety and class," the newspaper said.

Le Monde said the aftermath of the World Cup final had taken a "sickening turn" in Argentina, with fans filmed burning a coffin marked "Mbappé". France Info, the state radio station, said some supporters had racially insulted French players, including Mbappé.

Adil Rami, 36, the former France defender, who plays for Troyes, called Martínez the "biggest son of a bitch in the world of football". He added that the Argentina players seemed more intent on celebrating the defeat of Mbappé, after his hat-trick in the final, than on marking their triumph.

Gilles Simon, 37, the recently retired French tennis player, said: "Martínez … didn't manage to celebrate his magnificent performance without taking Mbappé on the bus with him, he got into his head so much."

There is speculation that Mbappé has been targeted by Martínez because of remarks he made in May, when he said that "football in South America is not as advanced as it is in Europe. That is why the last World Cups … it's always the Europeans who win".

Mbappé has refrained from commenting in public on Martínez's antics. He returned to training with Paris Saint-Germain, his club, on Wednesday and is thought to be keen to play in their Ligue 1 game against Strasbourg next week.

Messi has been given ten days off by PSG. Amid suggestions that his relations with Mbappé could now be strained, Argentine media outlets reported that he did not see Martínez holding the doll during the parade.

PSG executives are said to be optimistic that they can persuade Messi to extend his contract by another year.

Sport Carabao Cup: Fourth round

Etihad thriller gives City win

Manchester City *Haaland 10, Mahrez 47, Aké 58*	3
Liverpool *Carvalho 20, Salah 48*	2

Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Erling Haaland was among the goalscorers once again, Kevin De Bruyne pulled the strings and Manchester City showed their determination to lift more trophies in the coming months.

Football was back at the Etihad last night. In truth, the circumstances that framed an overdue victory over Liverpool meant that it felt as if it had never been away.

Pep Guardiola, the City manager, may regard the absence of Champions League success as the only blemish on his City CV, but here he got a kick out of their progress into the Carabao Cup quarter-finals, especially as it came at the expense of the holders.

A contest that ebbed and flowed throughout, as battles between these rivals tend to, ended with Guardiola able to reel off far more positives than his Liverpool counterpart, Jürgen Klopp.

Chiefly, there was the poise and prowess of De Bruyne, who does not appear to be suffering a hangover from Belgium's underwhelming performance at the World Cup, but also the rich promise of the homegrown full back Rico Lewis.

A first success over Liverpool in six attempts should present the precocious 18-year-old with more opportunities. He jumped from right back to swell the numbers in midfield as if he had played a role normally associated with Kyle Walker or João Cancelo all his life. An away trip to Southampton in January now beckons.

That Lewis looked so assured against vaunted opponents is a credit to him but was, in part, also due to the strength of the team Guardiola selected, with six of his contingent from Qatar starting and six more held back in reserve on the substitutes' bench. Such continuity brought early rewards.

Only 18 seconds had elapsed when, not for the first time on the night, a huge gap appeared in Liverpool's ragged rearguard and Haaland was encouraged to chase Ilkay Gundogan's through-ball. The pass had also enticed Caoimhin Kelleher into no man's land; he was stranded on the edge of his area and Haaland's eyes lit up at the prospect of clipping the ball over the goalkeeper and into a gaping net.

For once, his execution from 25 yards was all wrong. A shanked effort would send those in the crowd ducking for cover.

Yet the prospect of Haaland erring twice always seemed unlikely and so it proved soon after. De Bruyne was given the space to sprinkle stardust and did not disappoint with a pinpoint cross allowing the forward to dispatch a prodded left-footed finish ahead of the statuesque Joe Gomez. Normal service was resumed with goal No 24 of the season.

Thereafter, Haaland was largely quiet and on the fringes of a tie that see-sawed back and forth with Liverpool stubbornly refusing to wilt.

While opportunity knocked for Lewis and the eye-catching Cole Palmer, Liverpool also handed a chance to their youth with Stefan Bajcetic, an 18-year-old signed from Celta Vigo in 2021, starting.

He was thrust into a land of giants, at least in terms of stature, as he went toe to toe with De Bruyne, Rodri and Gundogan in trying to lay claim to the middle ground.

It was an exacting assignment — one that ended at the interval when he was replaced by Fabinho — but by then the visitors were level after another youngster, Fábio Carvalho, 20, had conjured an equaliser largely out of keeping with the tumult given City's pressure.

Joël Matip wandered deep into enemy territory — it remains a mystery why so many teams allow him to do this unchecked — and picked out James Milner with a clever pass. The veteran cut the ball back to Carvalho and a first-time finish found the corner. Carvalho must add more goals — or assists — to his game moving forward.

He, too, departed at the break, with Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain replacing him, although the tweaks had still to take hold when Liverpool were behind again.

Rodri lofted a pass out to Riyad Mahrez that allowed him to cut inside Andrew Robertson and caress a trademark left-footed strike into the net.

The breathing space did not last a minute. A lively cameo from Oxlade-Chamberlain began with him wriggling out of a cul-de-sac and threading a pass down the line that allowed Darwin Núñez to win a foot race with Aymeric Laporte.

The Uruguay striker was, at times, more miss than hit last night, but he did well to tee up Mohamed Salah for a tap-in, with the Egypt striker's movement having given Nathan Aké the slip. It was Salah's 15th goal of the campaign, though Aké would go on to enjoy the last laugh.

Liverpool's trip to Dubai for warm-weather training during the hiatus for the World Cup focused on reacquainting Klopp's players with the secrets of their success — for example, the efficiency of their pressing and counter-pressing — after their infuriatingly inconsistent start to the season.

The return of such tenets will help, but it is about personnel as well as principles and the reappearance of Virgil van Dijk at Aston Villa on Boxing Day will improve a defence that folded again just before the hour.

This time Liverpool were caught out by a short corner from which De Bruyne curled another assist on to the head of Aké, who was left unmarked at the far post.

"We should have defended all three goals much better," Klopp said. "The goals we conceded were completely unnecessary."

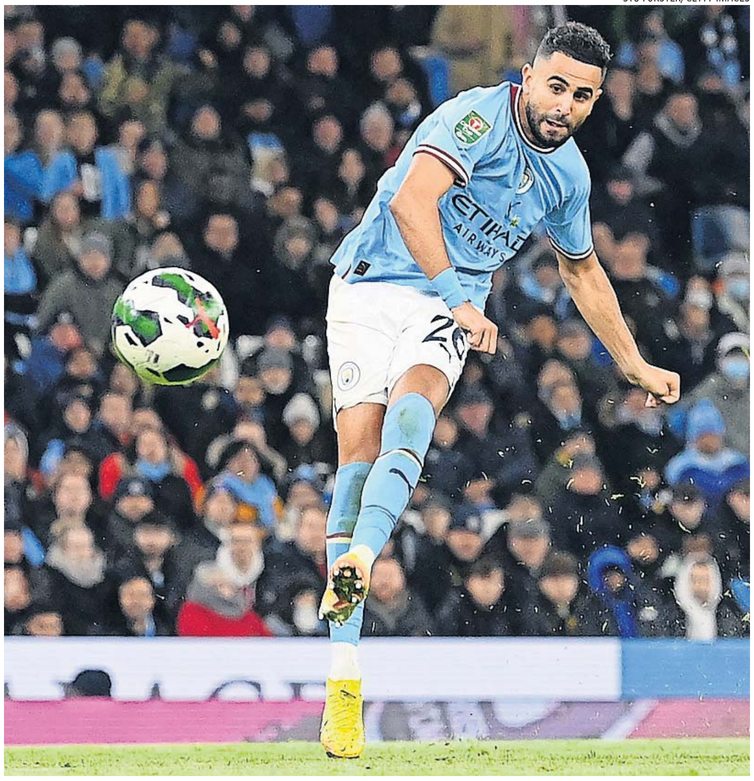
Later, Liverpool wanted a penalty when Oxlade-Chamberlain went down under Aké's challenge — there was no VAR at this stage of the competition — and Núñez shot across the face of goal when he might have picked out his team-mate.

That both sides kept pushing — a little too much as spats between Fabinho and Rodri and Robertson and Lewis showed — highlighted the importance of winning.

The habit remains ingrained for City. Liverpool's hopes in the second half of the campaign rest on it returning.

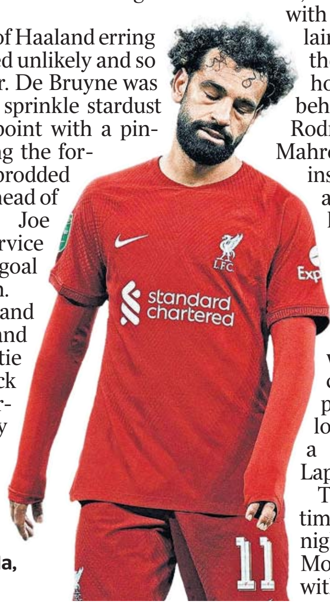
Manchester City (4-3-3): S Ortega 6 — R Lewis 8, M Akanji 6 (J Stones 61min, 6), A Laporte 7, N Aké 7 — K De Bruyne 8, Rodri 7, I Gundogan 7 (B Silva 88) — R Mahrez 7, E Haaland 7 (P Foden 73), C Palmer 7 (J Grealish 73). **Booked** Rodri.
Liverpool (4-3-3): C Kelleher 7 — J Milner 5 (N Phillips 38, 6), J Matip 7, J Gomez 6, A Robertson 6 — H Elliott 6 (J Henderson 57, 6), S Bajcetic 6 (Fabinho 46, 6), T Alcántara 6 (N Keïta 70, 6) — M Salah 7, D Núñez 8, F Carvalho 7 (A Oxlade-Chamberlain 46, 7).
Booked Bajcetic, Fabinho, Keïta.
Referee D Coote.

STU FORSTER/GETTY IMAGES





Mahrez produces a curled finish for City's second goal and then Aké, right, lands the telling blow with a firm header after being picked out perfectly by De Bruyne





Salah finished disappointed; Klopp and Guardiola, inset, share a smile

Phillips hasn't returned in best condition, claims Pep

Paul Joyce

Kalvin Phillips was omitted from Manchester City's squad for the 3-2 win over Liverpool after Pep Guardiola claimed the England midfielder was not in the right "condition to train."

Phillips, inset, was overlooked for the Carabao Cup match despite the presence of the rest of the World Cup players on City's substitutes' bench. The 27-year-old made two appearances as a substitute in Qatar for Gareth Southgate's side which totalled 40 minutes, having struggled with a shoulder injury.



Phillips has played only 54 minutes for City since a £42 million summer move from Leeds United, and Guardiola delivered a blunt reply when quizzed about his absence.

"He is not fit," the Manchester City manager said. "He has not arrived in the best condition to train."

City travel to Leeds United in the Premier League next Wednesday, but Phillips is unlikely to be involved.

In contrast, Rico Lewis left Guardiola purring with praise; he declared the 18-year-old will become an "absolutely incredible player".

Guardiola named Lewis, 18, as his man of the match.

"I had the feeling that without him we could not play the way we played," Guardiola said. "I was really impressed. He will be an absolutely incredible player in the next years because he understands everything."

over rivals at last

ISAAC PARKIN/PA



‘De Bruyne at his peak when grumpy’

CONTINUED FROM BACK

create Haaland’s opener after ten minutes and the match-winner, headed home by Nathan Aké 13 minutes after half-time when the score was 2-2.

Guardiola said he believed De Bruyne needed to channel his inner fire to reach the peak of his powers. “He was brilliant today, outstanding. Kevin has been here eight years and you know him as well as me.

“Sometimes he just needs to find the right fire inside himself — he has to be a little bit, I want to say ‘grumpy’ or upset — to play his best.

“He has to go there to get energy inside himself and when that happens, what a player — assists, scoring goals — he’s another player.

“I know it’s not easy to find this consistency every three days but in important games he has something inside that says, ‘OK, I’m going to do it.’ When this happens, he is Kevin De Bruyne.

“What can I say? In eight years he has done everything for this club, he is legend. He will be remembered for ever as one of the greatest players of all time for this club.”

Guardiola was also pleased with Haaland opening the “new” season with a goal, taking his tally to an astonishing 24 for the season.

And the City manager was especially happy given that the Norway striker, whose country failed to qualify for the World Cup finals, struggled with injury during the six-week break.

“Erling is not like Rico Lewis or Raheem Sterling in the past,” Guardiola said. “After one training session he is not fit and ready. He is so tall and big, to move this body is not easy. In Abu Dhabi, we were there for six days and he trained one day, he was still injured from before.

“He is an incredible professional, how he takes care of his body. He scored an incredible goal and helped us a lot. After 75 minutes, he was exhausted but he will be ready for Leeds next week.”

Jürgen Klopp, the Liverpool manager, was impressed by large parts of his team’s performance, and their two goals. “There is a lot to take from it, not the result, but in between we played probably the best team in the world, it is unbelievable how they are, and it is normal you struggle in moments,” he said. “We will not play every three days against Man City but we can do better.”

Quarter-finals, Jan 9-12

Manchester United v Charlton
Southampton v Manchester City
Nottingham Forest v Wolves
Newcastle v Leicester

Ronaldo’s image in Europe is tarnished

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Qatar, would result in proposals from a European club where he could add to his record of scoring and creating the most Champions League goals.

With the World Cup now over — and Ronaldo’s image tarnished by being dropped from Portugal’s starting line-up for two knockout-round ties before their elimination in the quarter-finals — such an offer has yet to materialise. Having failed to persuade the forward to accept a two-year, €300 million (about £265 million) contract last summer, Al Nassr believe they now have an agreement regarding a revised deal and want it formalised before the new year.

Chelsea’s new owners were ready to pay a transfer fee for Ronaldo after he requested a summer exit from Old Trafford, but they halted the transaction on the advice of Thomas Tuchel, then head coach. Other Champions League clubs who explored a deal included Atletico Madrid, Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund and Napoli. All stepped away from negotiations as Ronaldo became embroiled in conflicts with his club and the national team.

The forward had missed United’s pre-season tour to Australia and Thailand for what Ten Hag described as “a personal issue”. His relationship with the Dutchman became fraught after August’s 4-0 defeat away to Brentford and in October the club chose to discipline Ronaldo for heading to the Old Trafford dressing room before the end of a 2-0 win over Tottenham Hotspur in which he refused to come off the bench late in the game.

In November, Ronaldo criticised Ten Hag, his predecessor, Ralf Rangnick, United’s infrastructure, organisation and owners, the Glazer family, in an unauthorised interview with Piers Morgan on TalkTV. Within a week, the club announced that “Ronaldo is to leave Manchester United by mutual agreement, with immediate effect”.

In the aftermath of Portugal’s quarter-final defeat by Morocco, Ronaldo’s partner, Georgina Rodríguez, publicly criticised the national team coach, Fernando Santos, for leaving the record goalscorer in international football on the bench until the 51st minute.

“Today your coach made a bad decision,” Rodríguez wrote on social media. “You can’t underestimate the best player in the world. Life gives us lessons. Today we haven’t lost, we’ve learned.”

Before the World Cup, the Bayern chief executive, Oliver Kahn, confirmed that the German club had considered signing the five-times Champions League winner in the summer before withdrawing from transfer talks. “We briefly discussed Ronaldo at Bayern, and Dortmund probably did too,” Kahn said. “We also see the big picture of the Bundesliga. Superstars like Ronaldo are an important factor in attracting attention to the league; he is one of the greatest of the last decade. But we quickly dismissed that.”

Saudi Arabia’s pursuit of Ronaldo, who turns 38 in February, forms part of a multibillion spend on sport that is intended to overtake Qatar’s investment.

“Cristiano was busy with the World Cup and I didn’t expect him to negotiate with anyone,” the Al Nassr president, Musalli Al-Muammar, said this week. “We will not speak about other players. I wish the best to Cristiano with any decision.”

Fifa investigates Salt Bae antics

Ian Whittell

Fifa has ordered an investigation into how the celebrity chef known as “Salt Bae” gained access to the pitch and joined in the celebrations after the World Cup final in Qatar.

The sport’s governing body has acted after several individuals, including the restaurateur, whose real name is Nusret Gokce, gained “undue access” to the pitch after Argentina’s penalty shootout victory over France on Sunday.

Gokce, 39, was seen holding the World Cup trophy and attempting to take photographs with several players, most notably Lionel Messi. The images, widely shared on social media, attracted ridicule and criticism due to the players looking confused, and even angry, about his presence.

Until yesterday, Fifa had refused to comment on the incident. Breaking the silence, a spokesman said: “Following a review, Fifa has been establishing how individuals gained undue access to the pitch after the closing ceremony at Lusail Stadium. The appropriate internal action will be taken.”

Gokce was seen wearing Fifa accreditation as he twice approached Messi and tried to take a photograph, only to be spurned by the player. However, his social media account later showed a photo of him and Messi together.

Fifa regulations limit access to the pitch in such scenarios and only winners and heads of state are permitted to touch the trophy. The organisation confirmed that Gokce’s presence was unauthorised despite Gianni Infantino, the Fifa president, dining with the Turkish chef at his restaurants and following him on social media.

Ex-players wanted as referees

Tom Allnutt

Howard Webb wants to persuade more former players to become referees as part of his new role as the head of elite officials in England.

Webb, who reached the pinnacle of refereeing in 2010 when he took charge of the World Cup and Champions League finals, has returned to England after six years in the US and Canada. The 51-year-old started his newly created position as chief refereeing officer at the Professional Game Match Officials Limited this month and one of his big targets will be to tempt more ex-players into refereeing.

“We’ve always struggled to get ex-players involved but I’m sure somebody will want to be a trailblazer, somebody who has played in the Football League,” Webb said. “I don’t expect players who have played at the highest level [to do it], but somebody who is in their late twenties, suffering from injury or isn’t playing as much as they would like. We would want them wholeheartedly with the skills from their playing career.”

Webb’s declaration comes after Szymon Marciniak, who was once a promising amateur player in Poland, was widely praised for the way that he officiated the World Cup final between Argentina and France on Sunday.

Sport

Smith's Ashes warning

Australian batsman refines technique and is better than ever

Pages 58-59



MATT MCNULTY/GETTY IMAGES



Sublime De Bruyne sinks Liverpool

Belgian puts World Cup misery behind him but Pep says Phillips has not returned in best condition

Man City	3
Liverpool	2

Ian Whittell

Pep Guardiola was delighted to see "grumpy" Kevin De Bruyne back to his peerless best in Manchester City's thrilling Carabao Cup fourth-round win over Liverpool last night.

The City manager, though, was seemingly less impressed with Kalvin Phillips, who was surprisingly left out of the squad. Guardiola revealed that the England midfielder had "not arrived in the best condition to train" after returning from the World Cup in Qatar having made two substitute appearances against Wales and Senegal that totalled 40 minutes.

Even without Phillips, City earned a place in the quarter-finals, and a tie away to Southampton, thanks to the Belgium playmaker, who put behind him a disappointing World Cup with a masterclass that inspired City to victory and set up another goal for Erling Haaland.

De Bruyne hit superb crosses to

Continued on page 65

Haaland shows his gratitude to De Bruyne after the Belgian's fine cross had been converted by the striker for City's first goal against Liverpool, his 24th of the season

European clubs snub Ronaldo

Duncan Castles

Cristiano Ronaldo is expected to join the Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr as a free agent after failing to secure a viable offer from any leading European teams. The 37-year-old had also received an approach from the Qatar Stars League, but the financial terms are understood to be inferior to those in their Gulf neighbour and rival.

Ronaldo secured a compensation-free exit from Manchester United last month when the club and player agreed to a no-fault termination of a contract that had been due to run until the end of the season. The five-times Ballon d'Or winner, whose second spell at Old Trafford ended after a TV interview in which he criticised the club and the manager, Erik ten Hag, had hoped that being a free agent, coupled with the platform of the World Cup finals held in

Continued on page 65

'Shot clock' to quicken rugby

John Westerby

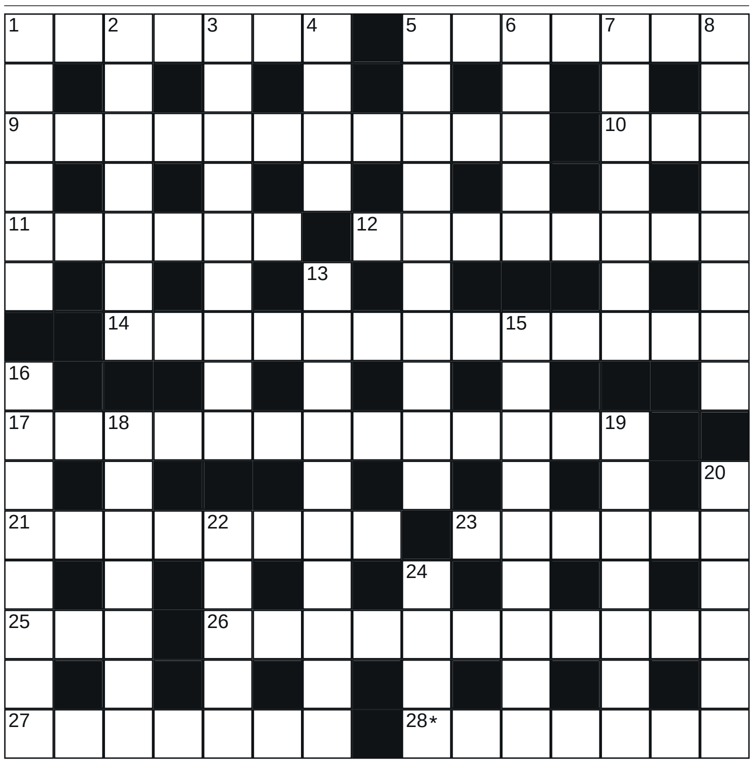
World Rugby has issued a string of directives designed to speed up the game, including a "shot clock" for goal-kickers that will be displayed on TV and on the big screens at stadiums.

The new protocols, which come into effect on January 1, are being implemented in response to concerns that the sport is suffering as a spectacle because of breaks in play caused by the likes of scrums being reset and television match official consultations. It is hoped the changes will "support a quicker, more entertaining game while balancing safety and spectacle".

Existing laws governing this area, including free kicks being awarded for time-wasting and delayed lineouts and scrums, must now be strictly adhered to, something that has rarely been the

Continued on page 60

Times Crossword 28,481



ACROSS

1 *Times* received by bachelor with a model mind (7)
5 After wine, friend makes a bit of a bloomer (7)
9 Fancy furs on new designer clothes move from side to side (7-4)
10 Fat reduced by female dog (3)
11 Caper in country whose leader is ousted by pressure (6)
12 Reverential, installing last of garden decking (8)
14 Excitedly, one came into banks over opening of fantastic account (4,4,1,4)
17 Harry very bitter about a kind of animal abuse (6,7)
21 Who may work with horse shoes (8)
23 Melodic fragment wears thin for the audience (6)
25 Fitting edging for adult coats quietly (3)
26 Right doctrine confused i.e. Mrs Mop at first (11)
27 Got stuck into light food to start with (7)
28 Awfully curious borders for one area for flowers (7)

DOWN

1 Oil company's importing gems and guns (6)
2 Bagging promotion, that was impressive self-confidence (7)
3 Son riding bike, maintaining grand airs (4,5)
4 Bikini perhaps missing top shows damage (4)
5 Podgy king: he departed during tournament (5,5)
6 Note service returning to this point (2,3)
7 Rind of Emmental in Russian food and drink (7)
8 Reform urged: beg one to correct errors (8)
13 Awkwardly move vehicle around wood here (10)
15 Stupidity of answer getting disdainful remark by head (9)
16 Pinch of salt roughly put in pies the wrong way (8)
18 Severe health worker put on white coat after removing cereal (7)
19 Gallons given to seaman in bars (7)
20 Becoming crafty keeping tabs on Mike (6)
22 Not all charlatans raised from birth (5)
24 Make a copy of content-free, sardonic article (4)

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THE TIMES

2 ARTS

December 23 | **2022**



‘Then, he was a huge movie star, I was an unknown theatre actress’

Helen Mirren and Harrison Ford on their screen reunion, 36 years on

arts

25 best podcasts of 2022: from The Prince to The Rest Is History

James Marriott picks his favourite series of the year







History

The Rest Is History

Podcast of the year

For my money, the best podcast there is. The historians Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook pick over the past. *The Rest Is History* is hilarious, charming and full of top facts. This year the pair covered everything from the early life of Winston Churchill and the history of Regency fashion to the Costa Rican civil war. Pure joy.

Revolutions

Mike Duncan forges on with his quixotic project of telling the history of all the world's revolutions. From French Jacobins to Russian Marxists via Cavaliers v Roundheads and the American War of Independence, this is a brilliant guide to the turbulent past.

Empire

The broadcaster Anita Anand and the historian William Dalrymple explore the history of the British Raj. An entertaining guide to the frequently inglorious history of the British presence in India from the arrival of the East India Company to the implosion of the empire.

News and politics

The Rest Is Politics

This year Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell launched a political commentary podcast. It seemed a slightly odd idea, but it has been an astonishing success, topping the charts for most of the year. Opinionated, witty and sometimes quarrelsome, Campbell and Stewart draw on their experience inside government to analyse the chaotic events of modern politics. Cathartic listening for despairing centrists.



Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook, of The Rest Is History

The News Agents

The year's other big podcast launch. In a spectacular coup, Emily Maitlis, Jon Sopel and Lewis Goodall were lured away from the BBC to a new daily podcast. After a bit of trouble finding its feet, *The News Agents* has developed into an excellent guide to each day's news. There's a close focus on events in Westminster. Maitlis and Sopel are having a marvellous time freed from BBC impartiality demands.

The Backstory with Andrew Neil

They don't make big beasts bigger or beastlier than Neil. Podcast interviews are often lame, chummy and unchallenging. Neil's superb interview show brought some old-school heft. Among those in his sights in this first series: General David Petraeus, Charles Moore, David Miliband and Katharine Birbalsingh.

Stories of our times

Every day Manveen Rana (or the Times comment pages' David Aaronovitch) digs deep into one of the big stories of the moment with the help of The Times's network of expert correspondents. Whether it's the latest from China or an explanation of what the hell is going on in Westminster, they get to the heart of the news.

Foreign affairs

Americast

It's odd when the BBC podcast sounds like the scrappy outsider. *Americast* (which used to star Maitlis and Sopel) was relaunched this year with a new cast. American politics can be depressing, but Justin Webb, Marianna Spring, Anthony Zurcher and Sarah Smith have great fun as they pick through the madnesses of our nutty neighbours over the Pond.

The Prince

This was the year that Xi Jinping took an unprecedented third term in office, tightening his authoritarian grip on China. But how much does anyone in the West really know about the Winnie the Pooh-resembling Chinese pres? This series from The Economist is a superb guide to his life and times, tracing Xi from his birth into one of the Chinese Communist Party's most distinguished families to his downfall and rural exile then his careful, quiet ascent all the way back to the top.

Battleground: Ukraine

A number of podcasts sprang up this year to track Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. I've been enjoying this one that tackles events from a military and strategic perspective. The military historians Saul David and Patrick Bishop are joined every week by a guest to pick over developments.

Entertainment

Off Air … with Jane and Fi

Jane Garvey and Fi Glover's much loved podcast moves from the BBC to Times Radio (mwahaha). Two friends have a good natter about everything from the mundane and the trivial to the newsy and the geopolitical. They always set the world to rights. What could be better?

Unreal: A Critical History of Reality TV

Hosted by the journalists Sirin Kale and Pandora Sykes, this is a compelling (if depressing) look at the lurid world of human bear-baiting, sorry, reality television. Especially interesting is the way Kale and Sykes look behind the scenes at how contestants were bullied, humiliated and manipulated by producers to create more compelling telly.

Ideas

If Books Could Kill

A wonderful concept for a podcast. Michael Hobbes and Peter Shamshiri take aim at the "smart thinking" shelves of Waterstones. They scathingly deconstruct the big flashy ideas in a range of books, from the works of Malcolm Gladwell to *Freakonomics*. Is the "10,000 hour rule" nonsense? How far is economics ever really counterintuitive? Great fun.

The Long History of Argument

A side project of Rory Stewart (see *The Rest Is Politics*, above) for Radio 4. Stewart traces the history of debate from the high rhetoric of ancient Greece to the chaotic babble of the modern age. With a distinctly Reithian tone, this is the BBC at its old-school best.

In Our Time

In 2022 academics continued to head to Broadcasting House to cower before Melvyn Bragg, who juiced them for information on everything from Bauhaus design to the oratory of Demosthenes via the poetry of Wilfred Owen. *In Our Time* has been running for decades, but it's ageing like a fine wine.

GETTY IMAGES







Top: Christ Church College, Oxford. Above, from left: Felix White, Jimmy Anderson and Greg James; Xi Jinping with the Duchess of Cambridge at Buckingham Palace in 2015; Jon Sopel and Emily Maitlis. Below: Manveen Rana, host of Stories of our times

Investigations

Hoaxed

This podcast from Tortoise follows the story of Ella Draper and her partner, Abraham Christie (aka Papa Hemp — don't ask), who began to allege that Draper's children had been abused by a Satanic paedophile cult based in… Hampstead. Their nonsense spread online, and soon all the nutters of the world were descending on north London. Horrifying and fascinating.

Twin Flames

The folks at Wondery struck a rich seam with the online love coaches Jeff and Shaleia Ayan, who taught their clients that all human beings have a "twin flame" — a person you are supposed to be with no matter what. Your twin flame seems to hate you? Stalk them until they give in. Jeff has assigned you a twin flame but you're the wrong gender? Well, change gender. This goading of the vulnerable leads to many restraining orders. Fascinating.

The Feud

The Times writer Andrew Billen digs deep into a scandal at the heart of the establishment, which he calls "one of the most bizarre stories I have ever covered" — the tale of how the University of Oxford's most prestigious college became embroiled in a ludicrously expensive civil war with a member of its staff. Christ Church College attempted to fire its dean, Martin Percy, accusing him of "immoral, scandalous or disgraceful conduct". He denied the charges and refused to go quietly.

Londongrad

This fascinating podcast from Tortoise explores how the former KGB agent Alexander Lebedev and his son, the newspaper proprietor and Boris Johnson-appointed lord Evgeny Lebedev, conquered London society.

Crime

Who Killed Daphne?

In this true crime podcast a son investigates his mother's death. The Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia was killed by a car bomb. Her son Matthew suspected shadowy political forces were at work. And so begins a bone-chilling descent into the dark, tangled politics of Malta — including an interview with its former prime minister Joseph Muscat and George Degiorgio, the man who confessed to Galizia's murder.

Lady Killers with Lucy Worsley

The historian Lucy Worsley kills two Reithian birds with one stone. True crime (entertains!) plus history (educates!). *Lady Killers* follows the mysterious crimes of murderous Victorian ladies. Did an upper-middle-class Victorian woman poison her husband's tea? Did a wealthy Glaswegian girl kill her older, working-class lover with arsenic? A great idea brilliantly executed.

Fairy Meadow

A remarkable eight-part podcast from BBC Sounds about the disappearance of three-year-old Cheryl Grimmer from an Australian beach in 1970. Hearing from Grimmer's family is tough listening, but the podcast provides a window into the story of the "ten pound poms" who migrated from the UK to Australia in the years after the Second World War.

Sport

That Peter Crouch Podcast

Hosted by the former England footballer Peter Crouch and the presenter Chris Stark, this covers the ins and outs of the beautiful game, "World Cup widows" and the bitchiest strikers. Guests have included the singer Ed Sheeran.

Tailenders

Radio 5 Live's jolly and good-natured *Tailenders* is hosted by the presenter Greg James, the cricketer Jimmy Anderson and the musician Felix White. It's as much about the general chat as the subject under discussion.



Literature

Close Readings

The best poetry podcast. Professors Seamus Perry (Oxford) and Mark Ford (UCL) analyse the work of the greatest poets of the 19th and 20th centuries. It has the air of a programme that might have been made by the BBC 50 years ago, but is produced by the London Review of Books.

The hot list
Your guide to the weekend

Film

The Pale Blue Eye
This detective story has Christian Bale play a 19th-century cop investigating murders at West Point military academy. It has extraordinary candlelit interiors, a fine screenplay from the writer-director Scott Cooper, and a knockout cast. Timothy Spall, Gillian Anderson and Toby Jones, *pictured with Anderson*, are strong in supporting roles, but Harry Melling stands out as Edgar Allan Poe. *See review, page 7. In cinemas now and on Netflix from Jan 6*



Classical

Messiah
There's still time to get your seasonal Handel fix. The voices of Polyphony team up with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in the classic oratorio, with seasoned soloists including Iestyn Davies, *right. St John's Smith Square, SW1 (sjss.org.uk), tonight*



Pop

Alexander O'Neal
In what is becoming an annual affair, the Mississippi-born R&B legend returns to the Jazz Cafe for a night of smooth soul music. Blessed with a similar vocal range to Otis Redding, O'Neal began with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis before becoming huge in the 1980s with *If You Were Here Tonight* and *Criticize*, establishing himself as the last word in upmarket R&B. *Jazz Cafe, NW1, (thejazzcafelondon.com), tonight*



Comedy

Liz Kingsman: One Woman Show
Like an *Airplane!* for the *Fleabag* generation, Kingsman's beautifully performed, supremely self-aware and self-questioning parody has its (Christmas) cake and eats it in the most glorious and hilarious fashion. *See review, page 10. Ambassadors Theatre, WC2 (onewomanshow.co.uk), tonight, 6pm & 8pm, tomorrow 3pm (matinee only)*



Theatre

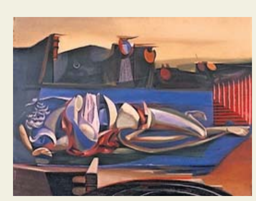
Standing at the Sky's Edge
A moving and resonant depiction of postwar British life in a musical that draws entirely upon the back catalogue of Sheffield-born Richard Hawley.



This beautiful revival, featuring many members of the original cast, possesses remarkable breadth and depth. *Crucible, Sheffield (sheffieldtheatres.co.uk) today, tomorrow*

Visual art

When Dreams Confront Reality: The Sherwin Collection
Discover how surrealism influenced British art history through the work of Conroy Maddox, whose works were once seized by Scotland Yard, and Desmond Morris. *Hepworth, Wakefield (hepworthwakefield.org) today*



cover story

'Our relationship is different —

Helen Mirren and Harrison Ford tell Ed Potton about playing a married couple again in the new TV drama 1923 — 36 years after they first acted together



Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren are speaking to me separately about playing a married couple in *1923*, a lavish but bruising new TV drama about farmers in Montana in the run-up to the Great Depression. The two interviews make for an amusing contrast.

Ford, 80, is on a Zoom from a hotel in Las Vegas, where he sits begrudgingly in front of a poster for the show. Has he been hitting the blackjack tables in his time off? He fixes me with a weary stare and growls: "Nothin' here for me in Las Vegas." Ford is legendary for being taciturn in interviews and an early-morning junket can make a sourpuss out of the cheeriest soul.

Mirren, 77, has a much better deal — she is speaking a few days later by phone from the apartment that she and her husband, the director Taylor Hackford, keep in Los Angeles along with houses in London, Italy and Nevada. "It's very nice in the Hollywood Hills," she says brightly. "I can see all the succulents outside the window."

In *1923* the pair play Jacob and Cara Dutton, a hard-bitten husband and wife who run the Yellowstone cattle ranch in a time of economic pain and

> **Is she still intimidated? No, I think she's over that**

violent competition for the pastures from sheep farmers. Sweepingly photographed, the show is the second prequel series to *Yellowstone*, which focuses on the same ranch in the present day. Starring Kevin Costner as John Dutton III, Jacob's great-great nephew, *Yellowstone* has become one of the biggest shows in the US. "So they tell me," Ford says.

Despite flying under the radar of many critics, *Yellowstone* has connected with American viewers, 12 million of them, especially red-state republicans. It spawned *1883*, a series in which the Duttons acquire the land that will become Yellowstone, and now *1923*. There would seem to be a comparison between 21st-century hardship and the woes leading to the Great Depression but Ford is having none of it.

"*Yellowstone* is a contemporary show," he says, exasperatedly. "We're going back in time and we're dealing with the history of the family. *1923* was a complex time in Butte, Montana. The pressures of all of the other economic factors, economic components of the…" He stumbles over his words. "Ah f***. I haven't talked about this yet. And I'm gumming up on the little details."

Ford and Mirren have played a couple before, in 1986 in *The Mosquito Coast*, Peter Weir's adaptation of Paul Theroux's book about a US family upping sticks to the Central American jungle. "The relationship was obviously very, very different then because Harrison was already an enormous movie star and I was a theatre actress out of London and nobody had heard of me," Mirren says. Including Ford, she suspects, although he's too much of a gent to admit that.

This time she wasn't so intimidated.

"No, I think she's over that," Ford says with a hint of a smile.

"Now our relationship is very different because I've sort of caught up with him," Mirren says. "Well, I'll never catch up with him completely but I'm a little bit closer than I was."

Actually, when it comes to awards she leaves him in the dust. She is the only person to have done the "triple crown of acting" both in the US and the UK, having won an Oscar, four Emmys and a Tony over there, and a film Bafta, three TV Baftas and an Olivier over here. She gave us two classic characters — DCI Jane Tennison in *Prime Suspect* and Queen Elizabeth II on stage and screen — and has starred in films as diverse as *The Long Good Friday*, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* and the *Fast & Furious* franchise.

In 1923, the second prequel to the hit drama Yellowstone, set on a ranch in Bute, Montana. Below: Helen Mirren and Harrison Ford



Ford has never won anything so prestigious but can console himself with being the biggest movie star of his generation; his films having grossed more than $9 billion worldwide. Han Solo, Indiana Jones and Rick Deckard of *Blade Runner* defined male heroism in the Eighties — handsome, brave, laconic and breathtakingly cocky ("I love you" … "I know" etc). Yet he could also be strikingly vulnerable: being frozen in carbonate in *The Empire Strikes Back*, beaten to a pulp by Rutger Hauer in *Blade Runner*, having his wounds kissed by Karen Allen in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

All of Ford's wow moments have been on the big screen, though — I'm trying to remember the last TV show he did. "You know, I'm trying to remember the last TV show I did too," he says. Turns out it was *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* in 1993. "But this is nothing like TV," he says of *1923*. "This is a big, big production with full-scale feature ambitions. Each hour of it is like a movie." Created by Taylor Sheridan, who played David Hale in *Sons of Anarchy* and grew up on a ranch himself, "it's dense and it's complicated and it's beautiful to watch", Ford says.

"Western mythology is so much a part of the American spirit and it's a complicated story, the truth of which is not always told. It's mythologised," he says, now less gummed up. "This is a demystification of all of that. The Duttons in this period of time are land rich but cash poor."

It's good to see Ford back in a stetson. Born in Chicago to a German-Irish father and a Belarusian-Jewish mother, he moved to Los Angeles in the Sixties and his first credited movie role was in a western called *A Time for Killing* (1967).

"Maybe, I don't remember," he says, unmoved at my arcane trivia. Formidable and craggy like a ravine, Jacob is more nuanced than your average cowboy. "You'll see the difficulty of the choices that he has to make," Ford says. "Some of them you might find it easy to agree with, others not so much."

Ford is a practical man, a former carpenter and a qualified pilot. How would he have fared in that world? "I would have given it a shot." He is more effusive when the conversation turns to Mirren. "We're havin' a good time. She's not precious at all [he slips into a received pronunciation accent] — a member of the acting troupe. She throws herself into everything without any hesitation."

Like *The Mosquito Coast*, *1923* is about staying alive in a hostile environment. "Absolutely,"



Mirren says. "Battling nature and trying to carve out an existence." Her character is first glimpsed toting a shotgun, facing off with a cowboy. Tough, then. "Well, they had to be, those women. It was physical, death being round the corner all the time. Either losing children, which happened all the time, or losing colleagues from sickness or from accidents."

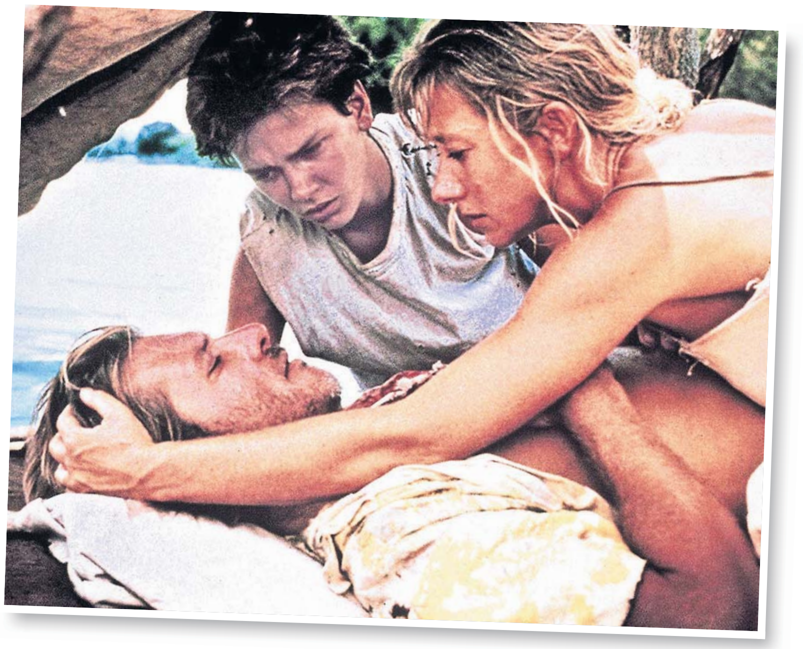
In the first episode, one of the younger Duttons is getting married. "Marriage is for women," Cara says to Jacob. "If it were for men we'd have spat on our hands and shook on it, and you'd have bent me over the first thing you could find that would bear our weight." A pause.

cover story

I've sort of caught up with him'

COVER AND BELOW: JAMES MINCHIN III/PARAMOUNT+





"That's not far from how it happened."

This is delivered by Mirren in a fine Irish brogue. "It always annoyed me about American westerns that everybody spoke with American accents," she says. "They were all immigrants. In Butte, Montana, they were from Cornwall — they have Cornish pasties there — from Wales, Scotland, from Ireland, from Moldova, from the Basque region in Spain. So this incredible mix of accents and cultures and food. And that is very much what created America."

She is something of a mix herself, having been born in London to Kathleen, a working-class Eastender, and Vasily, a member of exiled Russian nobility. Mirren still has family in Russia and is horrified by the war in Ukraine, she says. "I can probably never go back to Russia again, it's heartbreaking." Because of her opposition to the war? "Yes, absolutely. My opposition to Putin in general. Even if they win they won't win because they'll have a population that is so full of hatred."

The twitchy publicist is keen to move us away from geopolitics, so I ask how the Ford of today compares with the one on *The Mosquito Coast.* "Quite different," Mirren says. Back in the Eighties, "he had that carapace which is essential for people who have reached that level of popular stardom. It's so full-on, you have to develop some sort of defensive armour. He was always lovely to kids; grown-ups, not so much." Doesn't sound that different.

Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren play Jacob and Cara Dutton, a hard-bitten husband and wife who run the Yellowstone cattle ranch, in 1923. Top right: with River Phoenix in The Mosquito Coast (1986)

Mirren continues: "I'll never forget when we were shooting in Belize, we went to this party and this woman put her face in his face and said, 'I'm sure you think I know who you are, well I don't.' It was just so rude and thoughtless and horrible, and that's the sort of thing he had to deal with. He dealt with it with great grace, I have to say. He was just, like, 'Well, OK.'"

Does her affection for Ford extend to making him one of her signature shirts, as she has done for her husband and Liam Neeson, a former boyfriend? She laughs. "Not yet, but I will do."

What she loves about Ford, she says, is the level of professionalism. "It's rather British actually — don't make a fuss, just get on with it. He never disappears into his trailer, the set is never waiting for him. I think he loves the whole business of film-making."

> **Harrison was always lovely to kids; grown-ups, not so much**

Ford recently signed up to play Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross, the politician formerly played by William Hurt, in two new Marvel movies. "It's perhaps a different audience than for *1923* and I'm interested in exploring it," he says. He has also finished work on *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*, the fifth and probably last in the series.

George Lucas, who created Jones, said of Ford in the new movie: "He's incredibly agile, he looks even better than he did 20 years ago." Is he right? "Let's just assume for a minute he is," Ford says. "No, it's probably George's failing eyesight. I mean, I keep healthy as much as I can. And I'm doing pretty good for an old f***er." What does he do in terms of exercise? "Make movies," he says. "Play tennis and ride bikes." Does having a younger wife keep him on his toes? Calista Flockhart — the *Ally McBeal* star who became his third wife in 2010, following Mary Marquardt and Melissa Mathison — is 22 years his junior. "My wife would keep me on my toes if she was any age."

Performing a similar role in the new Indy film is Phoebe Waller-Bridge, who plays Jones's goddaughter, Helena. "I hadn't met her before but I had seen her show *Fleabag*," Ford says. "She brought a lot to it and I'm very pleased with the relationship I have with Phoebe in the film." The director, James Mangold, and his fellow writers, the British brothers Jez and John-Henry Butterworth, "have produced a script that satisfied my ambition to see the character at the later stages of his career. I think the film is extraordinary." Ford seems more emotionally attached to Jones than he was to Solo, say. "I'm not emotionally attached to characters," he says. "I'm interested in them."

Well, you sense that Mirren channelled plenty of emotion into playing Golda Meir, the former prime minister of Israel, in the forthcoming biopic, *Golda*. Some have criticised the decision to have Meir portrayed by a non-Jewish actress. "Transforming yourself into something was always the essence of acting," Mirren says, "[but] the whole idea of casting is changing. I have no criticism of that, it is a discussion to be had. I do think it's a difficult path to go down because you can say, well, it has to be a Jewish person playing Golda. Yes, but an Ashkenazi Jewish person or a Sephardic Jewish person? Because already there's a fundamental difference there. My only claim to fame in playing Golda is I did actually work on a kibbutz many years ago."

Along with *Golda* and *Indiana*, there will be another season of *1923* with Ford and Mirren on board — eight more episodes of this compelling odd couple. As the interview winds up I get a tantalising flash of the Ford that the kids get as he slips into an Arnold Schwarzenegger voice: "I'll be back."

Episode one of *1923* is streaming now on Paramount+ and a new episode will be available weekly from Boxing Day

Richard Morrison the arts column

It's the $750 million question: who really owns the Sunflowers?

The crime (if crime it was) happened nearly 90 years ago. It was compounded by an alleged act of "reckless indifference" 35 years ago. It involves people all over the globe: a Japanese insurance company, a London auction house, one of Germany's most famous banking dynasties and a world-famous painting by a Dutchman. And now a ferocious legal battle over the ownership of that canvas — one of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* paintings — will take place in a courtroom in Chicago. And the small matter of $750 million is at stake.

That's what three descendants of the German Jewish banker Paul von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy are claiming in "punitive damages" from the Japanese insurance company Sompo Holdings. The descendants say that when Sompo (under its previous name) bought *Sunflowers* at a Christie's auction in 1987, paying a record price of £24.75 million, the Japanese company did so in full knowledge that the painting was a "casualty of Nazi policies". That was because Christie's had published an account of the painting's provenance stating that it had been sold by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (a member of a distinguished family that also included the composer Felix Mendelssohn) in 1934.

The year is significant. The descendants contend that Mendelssohn-Bartholdy sold the Van Gogh under duress. By then the Nazi government had already begun persecuting Jewish businesses. The argument is that Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was forced to transfer the paintings "because of threats and economic pressures by the Nazi government".

Sompo says it intends to "vigorously defend" its ownership. As far as it is concerned the Van Gogh was sold legitimately in 1934, passed through various hands legitimately, and was bought legitimately in a reputable auction house in 1987. Since then it has been displayed in Sompo's Tokyo museum and enjoyed by millions.

The crucial point, of course, is whether Mendelssohn-Bartholdy did indeed sell his paintings under duress or whether it was a voluntary trade at

VAN GOGH MUSEUM/REUTERS



Van Gogh's Sunflowers is at the heart of a fierce debate about Nazis and art

a fair price, albeit in a political climate that was becoming increasingly dangerous for Jewish families. And this takes us to what has become the most contentious area of the campaign to restore to their rightful owners the millions of artworks that changed hands during the Nazi era.

Where paintings were blatantly

> **What about works sold for a reasonable price by Jewish people?**

stolen or confiscated, either from individuals or museums in countries the Nazis invaded, the case for restitution is relatively clear. Similarly, where it's obvious that Jewish collectors were forced to sell paintings, perhaps to fund their family's escape from Germany, the general consensus is that the heirs are entitled to reclaim the paintings or be paid compensation.

That is why the Metropolitan Museum in New York is being sued by heirs of the Jewish collector Hedwig Stern, who fled Germany in 1936. The heirs allege that, more than 50 years ago, the Met secretly bought and sold a Van Gogh painting, *The Olive Picking*, once owned by Stern knowing that the painting had a murky provenance.

Beyond that is a big grey area. What about the art that was traded by Jewish dealers, such as Hildebrand Gurlitt, who had struck a deal with the Nazis? His collection of 1,500 priceless paintings stunned the art world when it was revealed in 2012. And what about paintings sold for a reasonable price by Jewish families who felt they had to flog them, even if they weren't being compelled to do so at that particular moment?

The answers vary from country to country and painting to painting. A Dutch court recently turned down a restitution case brought by the heirs of a Jewish collector who had sold his Kandinsky painting before fleeing from the Netherlands in 1940. The painting was bought by the city of Amsterdam. The heirs argued that the painting was "misappropriated during the Holocaust", but the court ruled that it was sold because the collector was in financial trouble even before the Nazi invasion, and that it should therefore remain in the Stedelijk Museum in the city. However, in February this year the Stedelijk handed the painting back to the heirs.

A similar argument has been used, successfully so far, by two leading American galleries — the Met and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston — to resist calls for paintings once owned by the Berlin-based Jewish art collector Curt Glaser to be returned to his heirs. Many European galleries have returned paintings he owned, because they believe he sold his collection in 1933 as a result of Nazi persecution. The American museums say there is not enough evidence that Glaser sold the paintings under duress, even though he fled Germany two months later.

"It's restitution roulette," the lawyer representing the Glaser heirs thundered. That is only an aggressive way of saying that courts, countries and institutions are likely to make different judgments about the motives of people trying to survive in a totalitarian state 90 years ago.

I have no idea which way the *Sunflowers* case will go. I do know this, however. The only people certain to make a lot of money out of it are the lawyers. And the one person who won't profit — because he didn't in life either — is Vincent Van Gogh.

Handel & Hendrix — what a band!

Occasionally even a music critic has a flash of inspiration. Stanley Sadie, one of my predecessors on this newspaper, had one in 1959, when he started a campaign to get Handel's London home for 36 years, at 25 Brook Street in Mayfair, restored to how it was in the great composer's day.

Well, it has taken only 63 years, but next May (300 years after Handel moved in) the house will reopen after a £3 million project that has returned the rooms to their 18th-century glory and opened up more space for exhibitions, educational work and music-making.

And the happy coincidence of Jimi Hendrix living in the house next door, albeit more than two centuries after Handel died, has been used to widen the appeal of the new museum. It's now called Handel & Hendrix in London. Let's hope that tourists drawn by an interest in one of them cross over to discover the genius on the other side of the wall.

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THE CRITICS

Will Hodgkinson rates the Christmas singles p9
Dominic Maxwell finds Liz Kingsman ingenious p10
Carol Midgley dives into Riches p15

A divine cast in pursuit of demons

the big film

Christian Bale is impeccable in this devilishly compelling if sombre thriller, says Kevin Maher

SCOTT GARFIELD/NETFLIX



Robert Duvall, Christian Bale and Harry Melling star in a perfectly bleak drama

The Pale Blue Eye
15, 128min
★★★★☆

The General's Daughter, *The Presidio* and *A Few Good Men* are the cinematic touchstones for this army base thriller about murders, mutilations and demon worship at West Point military academy. Set in 1830, it also recalls Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow*, with its equally gothic Hudson Valley vibe and an eccentric police detective protagonist. In that film Burton and his lead actor Johnny Depp smothered the proceedings with indecent levels of camp. This movie, written and directed by Scott Cooper and starring Christian Bale, is a far more sombre beast.

There's nary a giggle, in fact, between opening and closing credits. Cooper's work is like that. The former character actor turned director, whose previous features include the violent and unsparing *Hostiles* and *Out of the Furnace*, has chosen to tell serious stories for grown-ups involving fictional worlds devoid of self-referential irony or froth.

The film opens with a quote from Edgar Allan Poe about the shadowy divide between life and death — "Who shall say where one ends, and where the other begins?" It's not just a mood-setter for the subsequent chiller, which features an exceptionally compelling Harry Melling as Poe, then a cadet at West Point as well as an aspiring writer. Instead, Poe's lines suggest the subject of the film itself, which is the state of zombified half-living that afflicts the grieving protagonist and ace copper Augustus Landor, played by Christian Bale.

Bale is an unimpugnable screen giant returning for his third outing with Cooper (he was in *Hostiles* and *Out of the Furnace*). He doesn't make mistakes, or bad choices, on camera. It's no wonder that Joaquin Phoenix, when receiving a Screen Actors Guild award in 2020, called Bale "infuriating", adding, "I wish you would, one time, just suck once."

Bale's Landor is a vision of careworn inertia, physically slight in appearance and shaken profoundly by a double tragedy — the death of his wife and the disappearance of his beloved teenage daughter. And so, when the West Point bigwigs Superintendent Thayer (Timothy Spall) and Captain Hitchcock (Simon McBurney) request Landor's assistance in solving a grisly murder at the academy, the stage is seemingly set for a last-gasp investigation that should provide our hero with a twisty, turny and ultimately redemptive route towards closure.

If only it was that simple. Cooper employs all the knotty narrative diversions and the lovely closing rug-pull from Louis Bayard's source novel of 2003. But he does so with a certain dutiful precision, while concentrating instead on the greater sadness that afflicts the denizens of this shady place. Gillian Anderson pops up as Julia Marquis, the slightly creepy wife of the academy doctor Daniel Marquis (Toby Jones). She takes Oedipal pride in her son's good looks, and coolly circles her fey daughter, Lea (Lucy Boynton). When dead bodies are mutilated and satanic rituals suspected, Landor turns to an ageing expert in the occult, Jean-Pepe, played by Robert Duvall. The cast list is divine, with each actor engaged in the kind of commitment that only adds to the film's sense of existential dread.

The luscious gloom is sometimes very literal, for the other great stars in the movie are candles. There probably hasn't been a film with so many conspicuous candlelit interiors since Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*. And they're not especially well-lit interiors either — for instance the bar that Landor frequents functions in near total darkness but for a smattering of melting candles. It's there where he regularly meets a confidante, the prostitute Patsy, played by Charlotte Gainsbourg.

The film will anger the representation police. The women tend to be either prostitutes, harridans, nutty mums or victims. Yet, on balance, the men aren't too hot either (murderers or entitled psychopaths), with only Melling's Poe emerging as the sensitive soul of the bunch. His standout scene is a moment where he reveals to Lea that he communicates with his long-deceased mother. "The dead haunt us because we love them too little," he says, sad eyes wide. "We forget them. They feel most cruelly deserted and so they clamour for us." It's beautiful writing and impeccable acting in a perfectly bleak and maudlin movie.

In cinemas now and on Netflix from January 6

classic film of the week

The Queen of Spades 1949
★★★★★

One of the most underappreciated British horrors from one of the most underrated British directors, this Thorold Dickinson triumph is a 19th-century morality tale by Alexander Pushkin about a cash-strapped Russian officer who decides to sell his soul for a winning hand at the gambling den.

The visual style is baroque horror noir (lots of tilted camera angles), and the central performance from Anton Walbrook as the desperate Captain Herman positively buzzes with pressure-cooker intensity.



Yvonne Mitchell and Anton Walbrook

His deranged signature line is, "I know the value of money! I could do great things with it!" There's also an outrageously effective jump-scare in the final act (beware the coffin!). Martin Scorsese calls the film "one of the few true classics of supernatural cinema". And he should know.

Rereleased in cinemas

film reviews

This dimwitted biopic of Whitney Houston is excruciatingly bad, says Kevin Maher



EMILY ARAGONES

Naomi Ackie as Whitney Houston

I never wanna see this again

'From the writer of *Bohemian Rhapsody*" is the terrifying promotional phrase that precedes the arrival of this execrable misfire. Although the scribe in question, Anthony McCarten, has done thoughtful, probing work since his Queen biopic (see *The Two Popes*), he's certainly brought that same titter-inducing template from his Oscar-winning biopic to the Whitney Houston story, with frequently excruciating results.

Where to begin? In a nightclub in 1983 apparently (this Whitney has no childhood), where the legendary musical kingpin Clive Davis (Stanley Tucci), also one of the film's producers, encounters the talents of Whitney (Naomi Ackie) and, half-turning to camera, announces, "I think I might've just heard the greatest voice of her generation." Yep. Strap in, put your helmet on and prepare to be relentlessly hammered with reality-defying dialogue. Whitney, soon mega-famous and tackling an especially difficult medley, is comforted by a musical director who says, "You're the only singer on the planet who can pull this off!" She is seduced by fellow pop celebrity Bobby Brown (Ashton Sanders, comically bad), who wows her with, "You and me? We from the same place. We from da hood!"

Or, later still, while vacuuming the leopard print carpet in her New Jersey mansion (no, really), she turns on Brown and furiously announces, "I'm going to get a gun and smoke yo ass!"

It's gobsmackingly awful, and has no interest whatsoever in tackling the fascinating contradictions at the heart of Houston's success, especially her status as (from McCarten's script) "the first black all-American white-friendly girl". Instead the director, Kasi Lemmons (*Harriet*), brings little narrative style to the table and allows the material to unfold in jerky, clueless time-jumps with all the dewy-eyed superficiality of Houston's comeback interview on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in 2009 (briefly recreated here).

It doesn't help that Houston's life, in all its sordid, complex tragedy, has already been the subject of intelligent top-tier cinema profiles in the feature documentaries of Nick Broomfield (*Whitney: Can I Be Me*) and Kevin Macdonald (*Whitney*).

It's also unfortunate that Ackie's performance, although clearly committed, is consistently reduced by slipshod film-making to the level of kitsch imitation. That she doesn't sing the songs either — she has said that the vocals are "97 per cent Whitney" — only adds to the entire endeavour's overwhelming sense of dimwitted big screen *Stars in Their Eyes*.

On the positive side, Tamara Tunie produces a classy turn as Cissy Houston, Whitney's all-controlling stage mother.

And that's about it.

In cinemas from Boxing Day

I Wanna Dance with Somebody
12A, 144min
★☆☆☆☆

Wildcat
15, 106min
★★★☆☆

A nature documentary in name only, this tale of rehabilitated ocelots in the Peruvian Amazon is foremost a story of human redemption.

The sensitive star subject is the British Army veteran Harry Turner who, after leaving Afghanistan afflicted with post-traumatic stress disorder, is drawn to the verdant anonymity of the rainforest. There he begins the two-pronged process of personal recovery while reintroducing abandoned wild cats to the jungle.

Turner's story, delivered via video diary, phone footage and drone shots, is a startling narrative experience. It's defined by cheap, reality TV aesthetics, yet it tackles dark and disturbing subject matter — Turner self-harms and appears close to suicide. It's also frequently moving, and the few delicate scenes with his younger, hero-worshipping brother are infused with unutterable heartache.

Beneath the emotional power, however, it's hard not to sense that there's a performative element to the documentary's DNA. The scenes with Turner and his American eco-activist girlfriend, for instance, especially appear to wobble under the weight of incessant observation. It's here that a hint of melodrama creeps in. It's still gripping, though.
KM
In cinemas now and on Amazon from December 30



Harry Turner, nose to nose with a wild cat in the Peruvian Amazon

Corsage
15, 114min
★★★★☆

Vicky Krieps from *Phantom Thread* is on imperious form as Empress Elisabeth of Austria in this snapshot biopic that tackles a year in the life of public privilege and private despair. Set in 1877, when Elisabeth turned 40, it depicts a woman praised by dead-eyed courtiers for her looks, and flattered by popular songs that demand, "Long may she live, beautiful may she remain!" She lives in a gilded cage that's partially of her own making — she enjoys her own beauty myth.

There are hints of the Diana movie *Spencer* here, especially in the many sequences where Elisabeth is poked, measured and weighed by her staff. And there are nods to Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* in the selection of anachronistic tunes. Here, a harpist playing *As Tears Go By* by the Rolling Stones is very moving.

The film is directed by the rising star Marie Kreutzer, who, after *The Ground Beneath My Feet* in 2019, has created another evocative portrait of a woman on the cusp of psychological meltdown. The final shot is a knockout.
KM
In cinemas from Boxing Day



Vicky Krieps as the Empress of Austria

Lizzo v LadBaby: who will win the battle for Christmas No 1?

Martin Lewis, Mariah and Lizzo are vying for the festive top spot. By Will Hodgkinson

LADBABY/PA





The race for the Christmas No 1 is upon us and LadBaby are a hot tip for a fifth festive top spot in a row. This blogging couple from Nottingham fell upon an inexplicably successful formula: take a classic rock favourite and alter the words a bit to reflect an obsession with sausage rolls, thereby creating a novelty tune ideal for raising money for food banks. The songs were terrible, but in a good cause and devoid of self-importance, as was 2021's *Sausage Rolls for Everyone*, an original featuring Ed Sheeran and Elton John.

Now new depths are plumbed with *Food Aid* (★☆☆☆☆), a remake of Band Aid's *Do They Know It's Christmas?* in which it is Britain, not Africa, hearing the clanging chimes of doom. You cannot argue with anything that helps people to get through the biggest economic crisis since the Three-Day Week of January 1974, but having to listen to Mark and Roxanne Hoyle sing (badly) about how "the Christmas lights aren't flashing because people can't afford the bills", before the money saver extraordinaire Martin Lewis arrives to tell us to pray for sausage rolls, is just piling on the agony.

Of course our new winter of discontent might encourage people to embrace not love but hate. That could mean *F*** the Tories* by the Kunts (★★★☆☆) has a chance at yuletide glory. It is a chirpy punk singalong with words about how our Conservative cabinet "persecute the poorest/ Now the workers are on strike/ While this unelected government/ Do what the f*** they like". It is about as subtle as a former health secretary appearing on *I'm a Celebrity… Get Me Out of Here!*, but rather more sympathetic to the national mood and appealingly angry.

Shouty rants don't lend themselves to repeat listening, however, and it is a longer lasting pleasure to hear Lizzo wrap her pipes around Stevie Wonder's *Someday at Christmas* (★★★★☆). Wonder found the perfect way of delivering a universal and eternally relevant message of peace, love and understanding with just the right amount of sentiment, and Lizzo has the vocal power to deliver it all with conviction. This is the classiest of the new Christmas singles, but will that be enough during a time of year when taste gets thrown out of the window?

More likely it will be dumped as mercilessly as a Christmas tree in January, leaving *Christmas Drillings* by Sidemen (★★★☆☆) to capture the youth vote. Grime and drill are not traditionally associated with the season of goodwill, but this group of YouTubers have captured the realities of Christmas 2022 better than anyone. With the help of the rapper JME they complain about the John Lewis Christmas advert making people spend money they haven't got, take a pop at energy companies profiting from the cost of living crisis, and even suggest, in a total non sequitur, that Mrs Santa Claus's large bottom has the power to drive them into a state of erotic delirium. The result is that they will have no choice but to, in their own words, tap it. "Spending all your P, don't look under the tree… Ain't no presents till your birthday", they conclude gloomily, making this an extremely rare thing: an anticonsumerist grime/drill/novelty Christmas smash.

Going for a less controversial approach is the Latin American pop sensation Camila Cabello, who really gives her all to the Bing Crosby classic *I'll Be Home for Christmas* (★★★★☆). Cabello emotes her heart out, so much so that she promises to be home for Quiz Moise, if only in her dweams. But with soaring strings straight out of a Disney movie and a touch of mariachi brass in homage to Cabello's Mexican-Cuban roots, you can't help but be warmed by this innocent and rather glamorous evocation of the Christmas spirit — the spirit, at least, which has nothing to do with the story of Jesus and everything to do with overindulging on the After Eights before having a little cry to *It's a Wonderful Life*.

This being the streaming age where old songs live for ever and nothing ever crawls away into a corner and dies with dignity, a couple of classics are in with a chance of making it to No 1. *Last Christmas* by Wham!





Clockwise from main: Martin Lewis, centre left, and the LadBaby team; Mariah Carey; Lizzo; the Kunts

(★★☆☆☆) is, says this critic, one of the most overrated perennials in the history of pop. I hated it in 1984, when it came on the radio on Boxing Day as we were marched out of the house for the obligatory "healthy walk", and its combination of mawkish sentiment and tinkly Eighties synth-pop doesn't sound any better 38 years later.

It was held off the No 1 by (the equally or perhaps even more awful) *Do They Know It's Christmas?*, but that's no reason to garland it with the ultimate pop accolade now.

There is another favourite that never made it to the top first time round and is far more deserving of tidings of comfort and joy. Mariah Carey's 1994 No 2 *All I Want for Christmas Is You* (★★★★★) has it all: a joyful Sixties girl group spirit, a fantastic tune that lends itself to renditions in school concerts and karaoke sessions, some crazy high notes that prove almost impossible to emulate, and a message on the value of companionship over materialism that, paradoxically, comes from one of the most materialistic singing sensations of all time. Charity singles and anti-Tory rants are all well and good, but if you need a bit of cheering up this Christmas — and let's face it, who doesn't? — you can't go wrong with Mariah.

The 2022 Official Christmas No 1 will be announced today. The full Christmas Top 40 is counted down on BBC Radio 1's Official Chart Show with Jack Saunders from 4pm. To listen to Will Hodgkinson's picks search for The Times on Spotify

first night

A fairytale that's sure to grow on you

Clive Davis is charmed by a witty, tuneful adaptation of the classic story about a little tree that longs to be full-size

ELLIE KURTTZ



Molly Logan, in the leading role, and Jos Vantyler in The Fir Tree

theatre

The Fir Tree
Shakespeare's Globe, SE1
★★★★☆

Curmudgeons will complain that the bleak ending to Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale — in which a Christmas tree becomes just another forlorn piece of post-celebration detritus — has been softened to suit modern sensibilities. True enough, but before we all start muttering about kindergarten snowflakes, it should be pointed out that Hannah Khalil's adaptation doesn't shy away from all references to death and dissolution. And if an eco-friendly subtext has been smuggled into the storyline, Michelle Terry's production — festooned with snippets of carols and songs by Kool and the Gang, Joni Mitchell and the like — delivers enough wit and sophistication to appeal to parents as well.

Khalil, the Globe's resident writer, failed to impress our reviewer when she unveiled her version of the story of the Scheherazade story at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse last week. Her treatment of the Andersen fable — first seen at the Globe last year — fits neatly into the modern panto tradition. The running jokes are neatly constructed, the singalongs exude good cheer and there's even a cheeky reference to *Hamlet*.

You could argue that Andersen's carpe diem text is an early example of mindfulness. The genial Molly Logan takes the role of the little tree that longs to be full-size, unaware of what lies in store. Jos Vantyler gets plenty of laughs imitating a sprightly hare or a self-satisfied stork that dispenses nuggets of wisdom to the strains of Erik Satie.

Khalil draws connections between trees as the source of the timber in the Wooden O. Greenery is dotted around the auditorium; audiences can make their own paper sparrows too. The ever-versatile Tony Jayawardena may not be wearing a Santa outfit, yet he presides over the storytelling and the musical interludes with avuncular charm. Anna Crichlow joins in the fun, while Paul Ready makes the most of a slightly overextended digression, a version of Andersen's story of a Chinese emperor and a nightingale.

Some of the youngest groundlings, admittedly, began to grow restive before the end of the 75 minutes. Most, however, were still following the fate of the ill-fated tree and marvelling at Samuel Wilde's little menagerie of puppets made from repurposed cardboard. The climate-conscious gestures were delivered with subtlety — a welcome change from some of the Globe's other politically conscious offerings.

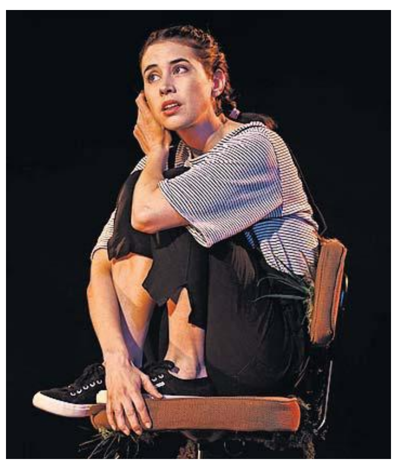
To December 31, shakespearesglobe.com

comedy

Liz Kingsman: One Woman Show
Ambassadors, WC2
★★★★☆

In the 14 months since Liz Kingsman's show opened in a 90-seat studio theatre, it has become one of the biggest talking points in comedy theatre for a long, long time. Its mix of the pointed, the poised and the just plain silly has been described as a honing-in on the new freedoms of — and hidden limitations on — how women are depicted in rom-coms and beyond.

Which is a heavy load for one woman and one show to bear. The good news is just how funny *One Woman Show* remains now it's in the West End. Kingsman plies a parody of the "hot mess" twentysomething-woman-looking-for-love-in-the-big-city stories of which Fleabag has become the poster girl. Outside the main story, she parodies a version of herself as a nakedly ambitious writer-performer. Kingsman keeps the smart lines and sharp reversals of expectation coming.



Liz Kingsman arrives in the West End

She takes to the stage in dungarees, a radio mike on her face, a bottle of water in the wings. These, like everything else on stage, will at some point be toyed with for comic effect. The story proper is of an unnamed middle-class woman trying to find her way in life with the help only of one best friend and one outspoken boss. Along the way Kingsman and her director, Adam Brace, keep just enough momentum in the narrative for it to be interesting without the absurdity. Does Kingsman conquer this theatre as she did smaller rooms? Not quite, I don't think. The show could reach out and grab its crowd more without losing its gloriously straight face.

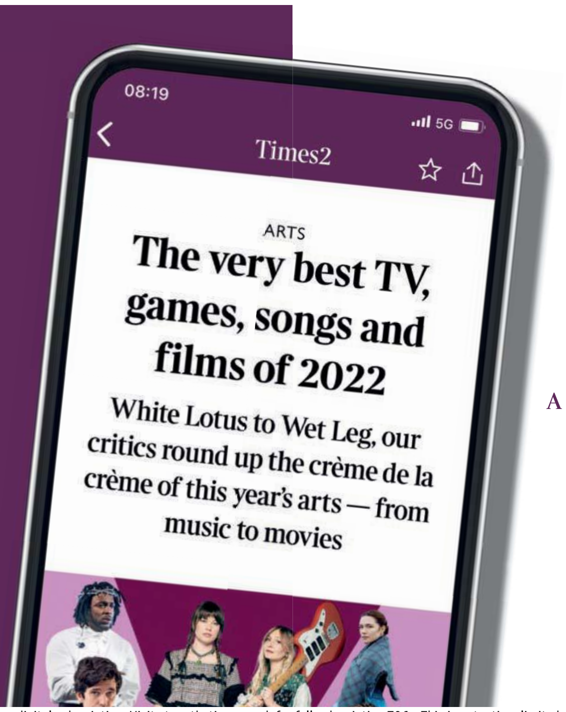
Yet even those who haven't seen all the kinds of shows that Kingsman is zeroing in on will recognise tropes galore that have entered the culture, will revel in the clichés clobbered, the poses punctured. Like all the best comics, Kingsman has never seen an orthodoxy she doesn't fancy questioning — her own included.

It makes for an endlessly ingenious 70 minutes of fun.

Dominic Maxwell

To January 21, onewomanshow.co.uk

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Expect rich pickings ahead in this family saga

Carol Midgley TV review



Riches
ITVX
★★★☆☆

Inside No 9
BBC2
★★★★☆

It's inevitably the fate of every TV drama that has at its centre brattish, unedifying squabbles within a mega-rich family to be likened now to *Succession*. Which is unfair. I mean, who'd want to be compared to near perfection? **Riches** has been dubbed the "black *Succession*" and, yes, it features a chief executive patriarch playing his children off against each other for control of the company, so there's that.

In Nina (Deborah Ayorinde) there's "sort of" a similarity to *Succession*'s Shiv Roy — she's feisty, independent of spirit and knows exactly what she wants from men, which seems to be no-strings sex. And like Logan Roy, the wealthy boss Stephen Richards (Hugh Quarshie) has children from two wives. But from here the comparison fizzles out.

For starters Logan is alive and Stephen died, apparently from a heart attack, at the start of episode one, so he's messing with their minds from beyond the grave. Plus, the Roy family doesn't have to put up with the racism the Richards do. Gus (Ola Orebiyi) missed seeing his father at the hospital before he died because a police officer didn't believe that a flashy car could be his. Let's hope he gets his revenge.

Let's be honest, the dialogue isn't scalpel-sharp like *Succession*'s, which packs a belter in every third line, nor does it seem to be playing for laughs. But I like it; it's fresh and intriguing and I like the idea that it was the spurned first wife who came up with the idea for the global black hair products company Flair & Glory.

Now the greedy second wife wants to wrestle it from the hands of the estranged children to whom Stephen left it, shafting the others. Claudia (Sarah Niles) seems to be on casters at this stage, so two-dimensional is her baddie schtick (her widow's grief didn't last long, did it?). But the performances of Nina and Simon (Emmanuel Imani) shine and, tastily, it looks like things could get nasty.

DAVID HINDLEY/ITV



Hugh Quarshie as the patriarch Stephen Richards in Riches

Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith recently announced that they would "pause" filming on **Inside No 9** after its ninth series is launched next year, so enjoy it while you can. If you imagined that they'd ease up on the ghoulish and the macabre because it's Christmas, you were mistaken. Last night's denouement was about as grim and stark as an *Inside No 9* climax can be, complete with close-ups.

No spoilers here, although it was a cautionary tale against greed and lofty cynicism. Shearsmith and Shobna Gulati played a pair of cheerful but dim "champers" (tourists who pay to camp in churches), whose booking clashed with a pompous academic (Pemberton). They rented it off the jolly church warden, played pitch-perfectly by Simon Callow. The episode was written to evoke MR James, Charles Dickens and Callow's previous stage performances of Dickens. While not the best or funniest episode of the anthology, it was beautifully judged for Christmas.

The tale of St Nicholas missing the bottom half of his jaw, his tongue flapping grotesquely, because unscrupulous folk steal saints' body parts, was delivered with grisly relish by Callow. We'll miss this gem of a show when it's gone. Hopefully it's an au revoir not a goodbye.

Radio choice
Ben Dowell



Late Junction
Radio 3, 11pm

***Late Junction* is one of the gems on the BBC radio schedule, so it can withstand a bit of seasonal tomfoolery, even when that involves handing over the reins to the cheeky comedian Tom Allen, *above*. The good news is that he is a longtime listener and fan (since his early teens in fact), who is sensitive to the quirks and flavour of this programme. In tonight's edition he shows himself to be a man of quite melancholic musical tastes, with a fondness for Renaissance choral music, sea shanties, traditional folk songs and a new genre he describes as "medieval emo". Expect a typically *Late Junction*-ish range.**

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Times Radio
Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Anna Cunningham with Early Breakfast. Early morning headlines **6.00** Chloe Tilley and Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Breakfast. All the morning's headlines **10.00** Matt Chorley. An insider's take on politics **1.00pm** Ruth Davidson. Covering the big political stories of the week **4.00** Times Radio Drive. Conversation with political and economic guests **7.00** Michael Portillo. Cultured conversation and political interview **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** Stories of Our Times **1.30** Red Box **2.00** Highlights from Times Radio

Radio 2
FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show **9.30** Ken Bruce. The author Jacqueline Wilson chooses her Tracks of My Years **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Scott Mills **3.30** Scott Mills' Wonder Years **4.00** Sara Cox **7.00** Michelle Visage. Festive hits from across the pop music genre **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits. Feelgood party classics **9.00** The Good Groove with DJ Spoony. Soulful house and lyrical garage tunes **11.00** The Rock Show with Johnnie Walker. Johnnie chats to Brian Johnson **12.00** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop (r) **1.00am** Gary Barlow — We Write the Songs (r) **2.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin (r) **3.00** Radio 2 Piano Room **4.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco

Radio 3
FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
Petroc Trelawny announces the winner of the Breakfast Carol Competition
9.00 Essential Classics
Tom McKinney plays classical music
12.00 Composer of the Week: Bach at Christmas (1685-1750)
Donald Macleod follows Bach and his musicians as they're forced to sprint between churches on Christmas Day, and the old composer produces a splendid final Christmas Cantata for the scholars of Leipzig University. Bach (*Unser Mund sei voll Lachens*, BWV 110: Opening Chorus; *A Musical Offering*, BWV 1079, *Sonata sopr'il Sogetto Reale a Traversa*, Violino e Continuo: 1. Largo & 2. Allegro; Canonic Variations on "*Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her*", BWV 769; *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, BWV 191; and *Puer natus in Bethlehem*, BWV 603)
1.00pm Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert
John Toal introduces the cellist Natalie Clein and friends performing music by Rebecca Clarke and Beethoven at the 2022 Belfast International Arts Festival. Rebecca Clarke (Viola sonata); and Beethoven (Piano Trio in E Flat Op.1 No.1)
2.00 Afternoon Concert
Penny Gore with an afternoon of music from the concert halls of Europe and BBC orchestras. Leopold Mozart (*A musical sleigh ride*); Tchaikovsky (*Snow Maiden* Suite); Bach (*Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, BWV.51); Dohnanyi (Pastorale — *Ungarisches Weinachtslied*); Mozart (Symphony No.41 in C, K.551 *"Jupiter"*); Trad. Syrian (*Ya Mariam*); Trad. Armenian arr. Yervand Yerkanian (*Aysor Tsntsan*); Trad. Indian arr. Gijs Kramers (*Kaaval Malakhmare*); Borodin (Polovtsian dances *Prince Igor*); and Johann Jakob Walther (*Passacaille*, Sonata No.6)
4.30 The Listening Service
Tom Service discusses the various meanings given to the sound of bells (r)
5.00 New Generation Artists
Geneva Lewis, and Santiago Cañón-Valencia perform. Bach (*O Jesulein suss*, BWV 493); Gershwin (*Three Preludes*); Balakirev (*The Crescent Moon*); Schubert (*An der Mond*, D193; *Auf der Donau*; and *Pensa, che questo istante*, D76 — 1813); R Schumann (Violin Sonata No 2 in D minor, Op 121); and Fergus McCreadie (*Morning Moon*)
6.15 Words and Music
An edition on the theme of Napoleon (r)
7.30 Proms at Christmas 2022
From the BBC Proms 2022: Five exceptional soloists, including Iestyn Davies and Mary Bevan, join John Butt and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment as they drive to the emotional core of this sublime music. Presented by Hannah French from the Royal Albert Hall. Bach (Mass in B minor)
9.20 1922: Leisure and Entertainment
The tennis stars and styles of 1922 are examined by Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough
9.35 Proms at Christmas 2022
From the BBC Proms 2022: András Schiff performs. Presented by Katie Derham from the Royal Albert Hall. Beethoven (Piano Sonata No. 30 in E, Op. 109; Piano Sonata No. 31 in A flat, Op. 110; and Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111)
11.00 Late Junction
Tom Allen takes the reins, steering the *Late Junction* sleigh towards some of his musical favourites and sharing a mixtape from the Sun Ra Arkestra. ***See Radio Choice***
1.00am Ultimate Calm (r)
3.00 Through the Night

Radio 4
FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz LW: 198kHz MW: 720 kHz
5.30am News Briefing
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
5.58 Tweet of the Day (6/12) (r)
6.00 Today
With Justin Webb and Martha Kearney
8.31 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament
9.00 Desert Island Discs
Lauren Laverne talks to Steven Spielberg (r)
9.45 (LW) Daily Service
9.45 Book of the Week: Agatha Christie — A Very Elusive Woman
By Lucy Worsley (5/5)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Magazine presented by Anita Rani
11.00 The Truth About Jazz
Clive Myrie learns more about how jazz was used as a form of soft power diplomacy by the American establishment (3/4) (r)
11.30 Conversations from a Long Marriage at Christmas Again
Comedy two-hander, by Jan Etherington, starring Joanna Lumley and Roger Allam (r)
12.01pm (LW) Shipping Forecast
12.04 Richard Rogers, Catalyst
Tom Dyckhoff looks back at the life and work of the architect Richard Rogers (r)
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Living with the News
Oliver Burkeman discusses selectivity in choosing issues to engage with (5/5)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell — Firewall
By James Swallow (4/8)
2.45 Why Do We Do That?
Clearing up in shared households (9/10)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time
3.45 Short Works
The Wood at Midwinter by Susanna Clarke, read by Sophie McShera (2)
4.00 Last Word
4.30 Feedback
With Andrea Catherwood. Last in the series
5.00 PM
5.54 (LW) Shipping Forecast
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Dead Ringers
Comedy impressions. Last in the series
7.00 The Archers
Jolene and Fallon to compare notes
7.15 Screenshot
Exploring Christmas ghost stories and the rom-com at Christmas (3/9)
8.00 News Review of the Year
A look back at the stories that hit the headlines in the past year
8.50 A Point of View
A reflection on a topical issue
9.00 Neil Gaiman and the BBC Symphony Orchestra
A concert featuring the author and the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1/2) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
With Julian Worricker
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Marple — Three New Stories
Part two of *Miss Marple's Christmas* by Ruth Ware. Read by Georgie Glen (5/10)
11.00 Uncanny Christmas Special
A family Christmas is turned upside down
11.30 Great Lives
Slade frontman Noddy Holder discusses the life of Chuck Berry (3/8) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Agatha Christie — A Very Elusive Woman (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra
Digital only
8.00am Parsley Sidings **8.30** Winston at Christmas **9.00** Act Your Age **9.30** Bleak Expectations **10.00** Lena Marsh, Live and Shticking! **10.45** The Mousehole Cat **11.00** Detective **11.30** The Left-Handed Sleeper **12.00** A Maigret Christmas **12.15pm** HighLites: Split Ends **12.30** Romance and Adventure **1.00** Parsley Sidings **1.30** Winston at Christmas **2.00** Act Your Age **2.30** Bleak Expectations **3.00** Lena Marsh, Live and Shticking! **3.45** The Mousehole Cat **4.00** Detective **4.30** The Left-Handed Sleeper **5.00** A Maigret Christmas **5.15** HighLites: Split Ends **5.30** Romance and Adventure **6.00** Parsley Sidings **6.30** Winston at Christmas **7.00** Act Your Age. Comedy show **7.30** Bleak Expectations. Comedy, by Mark Evans. Last in the series **8.00** One Day in Winter: Driving Home for Christmas. Exploring the emotions of people travelling home for the festive period **8.30** Soul Music. Personal stories of the song River by Joni Mitchell, from her 1971 album, *Blue* **9.00** The Film We Can't See. The creative but awkward dynamic between Adam and Anton blows up **9.45** Time. Father Time. By Olga Grushin, read by David Warner **10.00** The Confessional. Neil Dudgeon shares three confessions with Stephen Mangan **10.30** The Harpoon **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview. Rob Deering talks to Pierre Novellie **11.00** Comedy Club: Penny Dreadfuls — Brothers Faversham **11.20** James Acaster's Perfect Sounds

Radio 5 Live
MW: 693, 909
5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** Breakfast **9.00** Qasa Alom **11.00** Chiles on Friday **1.00pm** Kammy & Ben's Proper Football Podcast **2.00** Elis James and John Robins **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport: The Friday Football Social **9.00** 5 Live Boxing **10.00** Stephen Nolan **1.00am** Laura McGhie

talkSPORT
MW: 1053, 1089 kHz
5.00am Early Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Alan Brazil **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** Drive with Andy Goldstein and Darren Bent **7.00** GameDay Countdown **10.00** Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Martin Kelner

TalkRadio
Digital only
5.00am James Max **6.30** Jeremy Kyle **10.00** The Independent Republic of Mike Graham **1.00pm** Andre Walker **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Plank of the Week Christmas Special **8.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of **9.00** The Talk **10.00** Tom Newton Dunn **11.00** Live: James Whale **1.00am** Martin Kelner

6 Music
Digital only
5.00am The Remix with Chris Hawkins **5.30** Chris Hawkins **7.30** Nemone **10.30** Mary Anne Hobbs **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** The People's Party with Afrodeutsche **9.00** Queermas — Derrick Carter **10.00** Queermas — I. Jordan **11.00** Queermas — Maya Jane Coles **12.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **1.00am** Emo Forever **2.00** Focus Beats **4.00** Ambient Focus

Virgin Radio
Digital only
6.30am Chris Evans **10.00** Eddy Temple-Morris **1.00pm** Jayne Middlemiss **4.00** Steve Denyer **7.00** Ben Jones **10.00** Rich Williams **1.00am** Olivia Jones

Classic FM
FM: 100-102 MHz
6.00am More Music Breakfast **9.00** Gareth Malone **12.00** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00pm** John Brunning **7.00** Smooth Classics at Seven **9.00** Carols from St Paul's. Presented by Zeb Soanes **10.00** Smooth Classics **1.00am** Katie Breathwick **4.00** Sam Pittis

television & radio

Viewing Guide
James Jackson

Motherland
BBC1, 9.30pm

Top pick

Motherland **hasn't become one of the most loved comedies for nothing. It nails the frustrations of parenthood and the diabolical politics of the school gate. Now, however, it is nailing the frustrations of Christmas too. It will be a comedy of recognition for many, but it is always witty in a weary kind of way. For this one-off return, we have three Christmases from hell in 30 minutes. The slightly manic anti-heroine Julia (Anna Maxwell Martin) is hosting a full house for Christmas dinner. You'd have thought she'd have learnt by now, given her propensity for stressed-out resentment. Sure enough, she is soon dealing with an influx of grandparents demanding endless cups of tea. She has also invited the hapless beta male Kevin (Paul Ready), saving him from his alternative: dining on turkey crisps from a hotel vending machine in the company of other divorced dads. If that's a recipe for a meltdown, so is the festive meal of the fast-unravelling queen bee Amanda (Lucy Punch), who is forced to have a "blended family" meal at her ex-husband's new place with his fragrant new partner. Amanda's monstrous mother (Joanna Lumley) is there too, welcoming her in typically belittling fashion with, "Darling, you look like a sugar-plum pudding". As for Meg (Tanya Moodie), she is starting to realise her doting hubby (Anthony Head) doesn't know her at all, given the ghastly expensive gift he presents to her.**

Wonderland: The Story of Christmas
Sky Arts/Now, 7pm

A thoughtful immersion into the festive themes in the novels of Dickens, CS Lewis, E Nesbit, JM Barrie and others from the "golden age" of children's literature. Punctuated by literary extracts and clips from film versions of *A Christmas Carol* etc, experts explain the themes of home, love and hope in these novels, from JRR Tolkien's *Letters from Father Christmas* to Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. Loss, too: Kipling wrote his poem *A Nativity* about the death of his son at the Battle of Loos in 1915.

BBC1

Early

6.00am Breakfast **9.10** CBeebies Presents: Dick Whittington. The CBeebies stars gather for the latest panto (r) (AD) **9.55 FILM: Shaun the Sheep Movie (U, 2015)** Animation featuring the voice of Justin Fletcher **11.15** Stacey Solomon's Crafty Christmas. The host spreads seasonal cheer by revealing clever ways to cut costs and upcycle (r) (AD) **12.15pm** Bargain Hunt Christmas Special. Charlie Ross presents a special festive episode from Detling, Kent (r) (AD) **1.00** BBC News at One; Weather **1.30** BBC Regional News; Weather **1.45 FILM: Trolls — World Tour (U, 2020)** Animated adventure with the voices of Anna Kendrick and Justin Timberlake (AD) **3.10 FILM: Stick Man (U, 2015)** Animated adaptation of Julia Donaldson's children's book (AD) **3.35 FILM: Paddington 2 (PG, 2017)** The lovable bear's search for the perfect birthday present for his aunt leads to being framed as a thief. Comedy adventure starring Hugh Bonneville, with the voice of Ben Whishaw (AD) **5.15** Pointless Celebrities. A star-studded version of the quiz **6.00** BBC News at Six; Weather **6.30** BBC Regional News; Weather **6.45** The Weakest Link. Romesh Ranganathan hosts a Christmas special

7.30 EastEnders Janine and Mick prepare to get married. Meanwhile, Alfie is suspicious when he stumbles upon a chance meeting (AD)

8.00 Celebrity MasterChef Christmas Cook-Off Bez, Iwan Thomas, Josh Cuthbert and Lesley Garrett compete for the title of Christmas champion and the Celebrity MasterChef Golden Whisk trophy (1/2) (AD)

9.00 The Cleaner Wicky faces a blood-soaked crime scene in an ice-cream parlour, though his mind is focused on winning Weasel's Christmas raffle (AD)

9.30 Motherland Kevin and Liz go round to Julia's for Christmas, while Amanda grits her teeth as she spends the day with Johnny. *See Viewing Guide* (AD)

10.05 Two Doors Down Christmas Special Christine surprises the neighbours with festive generosity. *See Viewing Guide* (7/7) (AD)

10.35 BBC News at Ten

11.05 BBC Regional News and Weather

11.15 Last Christmas (12, 2019) After being evicted, an aspiring young singer is forced to live with her parents, and falls for a dashing stranger. Paul Feig's romantic comedy with Emilia Clarke, Henry Golding, and Emma Thompson, who also co-wrote the script (AD)

Late

12.55am That's My Jam Mo Gilligan hosts this game show where two teams of celebrities face musical challenges. With Alesha Dixon, Michelle Visage, Kevin McHale and Jenna Ushkowitz (r) **1.55** The Hit List. With Arielle Free, Paul Young, Fiona and Eilish O'Carroll, Gary Davies and Richie Anderson (r) **2.45-6.00** BBC News

BBC2

Early

6.10am Sign Zone: MasterChef — The Professionals (r) (AD, SL) **7.10 FILM: Newsies — The Broadway Musical (PG, 2017)** A performance of the musical filmed at the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood, California. Starring Jeremy Jordan and Kara Lindsay **9.20** Hollywood Greats: Judy Garland (r) **10.00 FILM: Easter Parade (U, 1948)** Musical with Fred Astaire and Judy Garland **11.40** Snow Wolf Family and Me (r) (AD) **12.40pm** A Taste of Christmas with Andi Oliver (r) (AD) **1.40 FILM: The King and I (U, 1956)** An English schoolteacher is recruited to tutor the many wives and children of the King of Siam. Rogers and Hammerstein musical starring Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr **3.50** Inside the Christmas Factory. The processes behind the nation's favourite festive treats (r) (AD) **4.50 FILM: Edward Scissorhands (12, 1990)** A lonely man-made boy with scissor-like hands is befriended by suburban townspeople — but they later turn against him. Tim Burton's fantasy starring Johnny Depp and Winona Ryder **6.30** Snow Dogs. Wildlife film-maker Gordon Buchanan teams up with seven huskies to take on a treacherous dog-sledding trail in Canada's spectacular Yukon wilderness (r) (AD)

7.30 Richard Osman's Festive House of Games Clare Balding, Ivo Graham, Ugo Monye and Su Pollard test their general knowledge skills (5/10)

8.00 Only Connect Specials: Christmas Victoria Coren Mitchell presents a festive edition of the quiz show (1/4)

8.30 Christmas University Challenge The University of Hull face the University of the West of England. Hosted by Jeremy Paxman (5/10)

9.00 Gardeners' World Winter Specials Monty Don demonstrates how to store dahlia tubers, plants out a clematis and plants up a container for winter colour and scent. Nick Bailey shows a conifer is not just for Christmas and Advolly Richmond tells the story of gardener Ellen Willmott. Last in the series

10.00 A Ghost Story for Christmas: Count Magnus Adaptation of MR James's supernatural tale. Jason Watkins stars. *See Viewing Guide* (AD)

10.30 The Limehouse Golem (15, 2016) The year is 1863 and the inquisitive Mr Wraxhall becomes fascinated by the long-dead founder of a Swedish family, who once made a strange journey to the Holy Land — on most unholy business. As he is drawn ever deeper into Count Magnus's dark world he discovers that the dreaded aristocrat may not lie easy in his tomb. Victorian-era thriller with Bill Nighy, Douglas Booth and Olivia Cooke (AD)

Late

12.15am Beauty and the Beast: A Comic Relief Pantomime for Christmas Lily James heads an all-star cast to retell the classic fairy-tale romance (r) **1.15** Sign Zone: My Life at Christmas with Sally Phillips (r) (AD, SL) **2.15** Simon Schama's History of Now (r) (AD, SL) **3.15-4.15** The Repair Shop at Christmas (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

Early

6.00am Good Morning Britain. Morning magazine **9.00** Lorraine. Entertainment, current affairs and fashion news. Presented by Lorraine Kelly **10.00** This Morning. Daily magazine, featuring a mix of chat, showbusiness news, lifestyle features, topical discussion, health and beauty advice and more **12.30pm** Loose Women. Interviews and topical debate from a female perspective **1.30** ITV News; Weather **1.40** In for a Christmas Penny. Stephen Mulhern heads to Chelmsford in Essex for a festive edition of the game show (r) (AD) **2.25** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory. Obstacle-course challenge hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara (r) (AD) **3.25** You've Been Framed! Christmas Crackers. Including a postman being attacked by a turkey (r) **3.50 FILM: The Grinch (U, 2018)** A cantankerous green loner hatches a scheme to ruin the festive season. Animated Dr Seuss adaptation with the voices of Benedict Cumberbatch and Pharrell Williams (AD) **5.30** Michael Bublé's Christmas in the City. The Canadian singer celebrates the 10th anniversary of his chart-topping album Christmas with a festive special featuring a mix of comedy, music and special guests (r) **6.25** Regional News; Weather **6.45** ITV News; Weather

7.00 Emmerdale Manpreet is determined to make a Christmas to remember, and it remains to be seen whether Liam has bitten off too much (AD)

7.30 Coronation Street Spider asks Toyah to keep his secret, and Griff persuades Max to lie to the police. Meanwhile, Tyrone's secret plotting leaves Fiz disenchanted, and burglars thwart Daniel's romantic ambition (AD)

8.30 Gino's Italian Christmas Feast Viewers are invited to spend Christmas at Villa D'Acampo with Gino and the D'Acampo family and friends (AD)

9.00 Alison Hammond in at the Rich End: The Riviera The presenter is on a mission to find out what makes the super-rich tick as she samples eye-watering opulence first hand. Alison Hammond travels across the French Riviera, one of the most expensive places to live (AD)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather

10.15 Regional News; Weather

10.30 The NFL Show Laura Woods is joined by Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to present action from the opening match of week 16 between New York Jets and Jacksonville Jaguars. Plus, a look back at the major headlines

11.25 Inside M&S at Christmas A behind-the-scenes look inside the supermarket at Christmas, following colleagues and suppliers at every level, from the farm to the factory and the shop floor as the crucial festive countdown begins (r) (AD)

Late

12.15am Teleshopping 3.00 Unwind with ITV. Daily escape designed to calm the mind **4.15** Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh. Alan is joined by theatrical producer Cameron Mackintosh and actress Anne Reid, and there is a visit to Chessington Zoo to see how the animals are celebrating Christmas (r) (SL)

Channel 4

Early

6.00am Countdown (r) **6.40 FILM: Rugrats in Paris (U, 2000)** The tots visit a French theme park, where Chuckie hopes his wish for a new mum will come true. Animated adventure with the voices of Christine Cavanaugh and Susan Sarandon (AD) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) **8.50** Frasier (r) (AD) **10.20** The Simpsons (r) (AD) **11.20** Channel 4 News Summary **11.25 FILM: A Christmas Carousel (PG, TVM, 2020)** A woman is hired to repair a fairground ride and must work with a prince to complete it by Christmas. Romantic drama starring Rachel Boston and Neal Bledsoe **1.05pm** Jamie's Night Before Christmas. Jamie Oliver helps people improve their festive dishes (r) (AD) **2.10** Countdown. Neil Delamere is in Dictionary Corner **3.00** A Place in the Sun. A hunt for a holiday home in the coastal town of Nerja in southern Spain **4.00** Château DIY at Christmas. Donna and Paul plan a festive drinks event with a twist. Last in the series (AD) **5.00** Kirstie's Handmade Christmas. Kirstie Allsopp stages her paper craft competition. Last in the series (AD) **6.00** Hollyoaks. Bobby tries his best to warn off Felix as him and Mercedes get closer (r) (AD) **6.30** Channel 4 News

7.00 The Dog House at Christmas Woodgreen Pets Charity continue their mission to home abandoned dogs in time for Christmas. A fox terrier, known for her escape attempts, tries her best to steal the hearts of a family. A smiley Staffie-cross tries to win over some potential adopters (r) (AD)

8.00 London Zoo at Christmas A look into the daily goings-on of the world's oldest scientific zoo, revealing how keepers and other staff make the holiday magic happen. From complicated animal moves and meeting the zoo's newest and youngest additions, to medical check-ups (AD)

9.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special Jimmy Carr hosts a combination of the comedy panel show and the long-running words and numbers quiz, inviting contestants Jon Richardson and Jack Dee to take on Lee Mack and Rose Matafeo

10.00 The Last Leg Christmas Bash The comedian James Acaster, the television presenter AJ Odudu and stars from *The Great British Bake Off* join Adam Hills, Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker for a seasonal edition filled with yuletide treats and festive songs

11.05 Father Ted Christmas Special Fathers Ted and Dougal endure their worst Christmas ever when they get lost in the world's largest lingerie department, leaving them in a highly embarrassing predicament. Festive edition from 1996 (r) (AD)

Late

12.15am Friday Night Dinner (r) (AD, SL) **12.45 FILM: Office Christmas Party (15, 2016)** Festive comedy starring Jason Bateman and Jennifer Aniston (AD) **2.30** Come Dine with Me Celebrity Christmas Special (r) **4.50** Escape to the Château (r) (AD) **4.55** Countdown (r) **5.35-6.05** Jamie: Keep Cooking at Christmas (r)

Channel 5

Early

6.00am Milkshake! **9.15** Jeremy Vine. The broadcaster and guests discuss the issues of the day with co-host Storm Huntley joining him for phone-ins and reading out viewers' correspondence **12.30pm** Friends. Phoebe meets her biological father (r) (AD) **12.55** Friends. Chandler and Monica's relationship finally becomes public knowledge (r) (AD) **1.25 FILM: You've Got Mail (PG, 1998)** Two rivals in the bookshop business fall in love over the internet, unaware they know and dislike each other in the real world. While things remain frosty in person, the pair's anonymous online relationship continues to blossom. Romantic comedy starring Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan, Greg Kinnear, Parker Posey and Dabney Coleman **3.45 FILM: Cast Away (12, 2000)** A manager for an American courier service has to fend for himself when a plane crash leaves him stranded alone on a desert island. Initially panic-stricken, he overcomes his terror to survive for four years on his own before building a raft and setting off on an epic journey back home. Adventure drama starring Tom Hanks, Helen Hunt, Nick Searcy, Lari White and Chris Noth **6.30** World's Strongest Man 2022. Action from the Giants Live series

7.30 Our Big Yorkshire Christmas Festive celebrations with Jane McDonald, and Amanda and Clive Owen and family from *Our Yorkshire Farm.* Plus, there are contributions from Julian Norton and Peter Wright from *The Yorkshire Vet*, and *Friday on the Farm* stars Rob and Dave Nicholson. As the people of Harrogate get their town ready for the Christmas festivities, cameras follow busy workers from the county doing their bit

9.00 All Creatures Great and Small Christmas Special It's Christmas in Darrowby and everyone is trying to make the most of things while the world is at war. A young guest brings wonder, mischief and cheer to Skeldale House at Christmas while everyone waits for important news, and Siegfried is asked to pay a visit to an injured River. *See Viewing Guide* (7/7)

10.10 Calendar Girls (12, 2003) When her husband dies of leukaemia, a Women's Institute member is inspired to raise funds for the local hospital. Casting inhibitions and clothes aside, the widow and her daring friend encourage their fellow members to pose nude for a charity calendar, causing a stir in their Yorkshire village and beyond. Nigel Cole's fact-based comedy drama, starring Helen Mirren, Julie Walters, Annette Crosbie and Celia Imrie

Late

12.25am FILM: Notes on a Scandal (15, 2006) A lonely teacher discovers a colleague is obsessed with is having an affair with a student. Drama starring Judi Dench **2.00** The LeoVegas Live Casino Show **4.00** Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh (r) **5.30** Fireman Sam (r) (SL) **5.50-6.00** Pip and Posy (r) (SL)



Stories of our times: the best of 2022

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All Creatures Great and Small: Christmas Special
Channel 5, 9pm

Christmas in Darrowby is fast becoming a most satisfying TV tradition, earning its sentiment through solid storytelling and a strong sense of family at the Yorkshire vet practice. James Herriot (Nicholas Ralph) takes a back seat for this story, which focuses on the prickly dynamic between Siegfried (Samuel West) and Tristan (Callum Woodhouse), reignited when the latter insists he will enlist for war. "I'd die if I let anything happen to you," the older brother pleads as things turn emotional. A seasonal special that's worth your time.

A Ghost Story for Christmas: Count Magnus
BBC2, 10pm

This year's seasonal visitation is written by MR James, adapted by Mark Gatiss and stars Jason Watkins; it can't really go wrong, and doesn't. We are in Sweden in 1863, where an inquisitive, slightly irksome Englishman, Mr Wraxhall (Watkins), is visiting the noble de la Gardie family to rummage through the archives. In this rather austere land, Wraxhall becomes fascinated by the long-dead Count Magnus, who dabbled in alchemy. The Count's mausoleum lies on the family grounds and, ever so gradually, things turn sinister.

Two Doors Down
BBC1, 10.05pm

A half-hour of low-key comedic brilliance that is possibly the best Christmas special this year. The neighbours have stopped at their local coffee chain outlet and it turns out Christine (Elaine C Smith) has £70 worth of points on her loyalty card. This prompts a surfeit of gingerbread lattes and turkey, cranberry, bacon and brie ciabattas as the sane ones politely field the oversharing eccentricity of the others. On returning from the loo, Anne-Marie (Siobhan Redmond) announces: "Left it absolutely spotless in there, Beth, if you're holding off for any reason."

Film Blood Simple
Film4, 11pm

This twist-filled film noir from the Coen brothers has Frances McDormand as Abby, the disgruntled wife of possessive Marty (Dan Hedaya), who hires a sleazy private eye to murder Abby and her new lover, Ray (John Getz). Great fun. Very dark. (18, 1984)

Sky Max

6.00am The 80s: Cinema's Greatest Decade (r) **6.55** Terry Pratchett's Going Postal (r) (AD) **10.45** Capital Jingle Bell Ball 2022 (r) **11.45** Agatha Raisin (r) (AD) **1.45pm** Never Mind the Buzzcocks Christmas Special (r) (AD) **3.45** The Unofficial Science of Home Alone (r) **5.15** The Christmas Movie Countdown (r) **6.15** It's Christmas Live from the Royal Albert Hall. A concert of Christmas classics (r) **8.00** Red Riding Hood: After Ever After. An adult Red Riding Hood faces a new problem **9.00** A League of Their Own Christmas Special 2022. With Tony Bellew and Eve Muirhead (r) **10.00** The Russell Howard Hour — Best of Christmas. Festive moments from the show (r) **10.55** Rob & Romesh vs Christmas 2021. the duo join the circus for a performance (r) (AD) **11.50** Rob and Romesh vs Christmas on Ice (r) **12.45am** The Unofficial Science of Home Alone (r) **2.00** Christmas Carole (r) **3.30** Christmas Crime UK (r) **4.00** Capital Jingle Bell Ball 2022 (r) **5.00** Highway Patrol (r)

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Storm City (r) (AD) **7.40** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **12.55pm** Mare of Easttown. Crime drama starring Kate Winslet (r) (AD) **6.30** Mare of Easttown. Mare Sheehan nears the end of her investigation (6/7) (r) (AD) **7.40** Mare of Easttown. As the series concludes, Mare reaches the end of the investigation as she attempts to bring the case that devastated her town to an end (7/7) (r) (AD) **9.00** Game of Thrones. Tyrion enlists an unlikely ally, Jon's warnings about the Wall's vulnerability fall on deaf ears, while Brienne follows a new lead as her mission to find the Stark girls continues (r) (AD) **10.05** Game of Thrones. Tyrion's fate is decided as Oberyn Martell and Gregor Clegane clash in his trial by combat (r) (AD) **11.10** Game of Thrones. Jon and the Night's Watch face their biggest challenge (r) (AD) **12.15am** Ray Donovan (r) (AD) **1.25** The Undoing (r) (AD) **2.25** In Treatment (r) **2.55** The Wire (r) (AD) **4.05** Storm City (r) (AD)

Sky Documentaries

6.00am Urban Secrets (r) **7.00** Discovering: Jeremy Irons (r) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **10.00 FILM: Well Groomed (PG, 2019)** The exuberant world of competitive dog grooming (AD) **11.45** My Icon: Deta Hedman (r) (AD) **12.00** Janet Jackson (r) (AD) **4.00pm** Urban Secrets (r) **5.00 FILM: The Loneliest Whale — The Search for 52 (PG, TVM, 2021)** A rare whale that calls out at a frequency unrecognised by other whales **6.50 FILM: Hitsville — The Making of Motown (12, 2019)** Painting a picture of the history and origins of Motown **9.00 FILM: Lancaster (PG, 2022)** Documentary telling the story of the legendary bomber synonymous with the Dambusters (AD) **11.00** Edge of the Earth (4/4) (r) **12.10am FILM: Who Killed the KLF? (15, 2021)** The rise and fall of the KLF in the 1980s and 1990s (AD) **2.00** Branson. Last in the series **3.10** SIC: Prince of MotoGP. Marco Simoncelli profile (r) **5.00** Urban Secrets (r)

Sky Arts

6.00am Arts Uncovered **6.15** An Evening with Il Divo **8.15** The Vienna Christmas Concert from the Stephansdom **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Michael Caine **12.00** André Rieu: Christmas Around the World **2.00pm** Portrait Artist of the Year 2022: Christmas Celebrity Special **3.00** 10th Classic FM Live Concert **5.00** The Agatha Christie Hour **6.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents. A man wakes to find a deadly snake in his bed **7.00** Wonderland: The Story of Christmas. Exploring festive themes in classic novels and poems. *See Viewing Guide* **8.00** Phil Collins: Going Back to Detroit **8.55** Peter Gabriel: Live in Athens 1987. A concert at the hillside theatre at Lycabettus **11.25** Berlin Live: Mike & the Mechanics **12.45am** Queen — Live in Rio **2.05** Discovering: Queen **3.00** Queen & Bejart: Ballet for Life **4.15** Music Icons: Jazz Rock **4.40** Music Icons: Soft Rock **5.05** Cheltenham Literature Festival

Sky Main Event

6.00am Live Big Bash League: Melbourne Stars v Perth Scorchers. The Australian T20 match at CitiPower Centre in St Kilda **7.45** Live Big Bash League: Brisbane Heat v Adelaide Strikers. the Australian T20 match at Brisbane Cricket Ground **11.45** The Best of The Big Bash **12.00** Sky Sports News **12.30pm** Live World Darts Championship. Coverage of session one on day nine at Alexandra Palace in London **4.30** Total Football. The definitive take from the managers and players themselves **5.00** Sky Sports News **7.00** Live World Darts Championship. Coverage of session two on day nine at Alexandra Palace in London, featuring four second-round matches **11.00** Sky Sports News **12.30am** Live NBA Basketball: Brooklyn Nets v Milwaukee Bucks (Tip-off **12.30**). Coverage of the Eastern Conference match at Barclays Centre **3.00** Sky Sports News **4.00** Live Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes v Melbourne Renegades. Coverage of the Australian T20 match at Blundstone Arena

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T AUDIO



TalkTV

6.00am James Max. An initial insight into the day's top stories with a whole host of experts from around the globe and across the UK **6.30** Jeremy Kyle. The host covers all the stories you need to know to start your day **10.00** The Independent Republic of Mike Graham. The host takes a look at the morning newspapers **1.00pm** Ian Collins. Hard-hitting monologues, debates and dedicated time for your calls **4.00** Vanessa Feltz. The host guides you through the big stories of the day and interviews **7.00** Plank of the Week. Mike Graham presents the ultimate panel show where the guests get to nominate their Plank of the Week **8.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of. The host presents his verdict on the week's global events **9.00** Football, B****y Hell! Andy Goldstein presents a brand new live football chat show **10.00** First Edition. TalkTV's news programme takes a look at tomorrow's news, tonight **11.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of **12.00** Live: James Whale. Reaction to the big stories of the day **1.00am** Vanessa Feltz **2.00** Jeremy Kyle Live **3.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of **4.00** Football, B****y Hell! **5.00** Cristo

BBC4

7.00pm Winter Walks. The Rev Kate Bottley treks across Wensleydale and Coverdale **7.30** Keeping Up Appearances Xmas 1991: The Father Christmas Suit. Hyacinth makes Richard dress as Father Christmas to hand out presents to the old folk at the church hall **8.00** Top of the Pops. Performances by Kim Appleby, the Beautiful South and Elton John **9.00** Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music. Robert Elfstrom's 1969 musical documentary charting the career of Johnny Cash **10.00** Dolly Parton: 50 Years at the Opry. Highlights from the singer's performance to celebrate 50 years as a member of the Grand Ole Opry with guest appearances by Lady A, Emmylou Harris and Hank Williams Jr **11.15** Country Music Christmas 2022. Carly Pearce brings some of country music's most beloved artists together for an intimate night full of holiday classics **11.55** Country Music by Ken Burns. The history of the musical art form from 1973 to 1983 (7/9) **12.50am** Country Music by Ken Burns **1.40** Top of the Pops **2.40-3.40** Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music. Musical documentary

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: Knight of the Plains (12, 1938) (b/w) **7.15 FILM: Dry Rot (U, 1956)** (b/w) **9.00 FILM: Come to the Stable (U, 1949)** (b/w) **10.55 FILM: Murder by Proxy (PG, 1954)** (b/w) **12.40pm FILM: Bush Christmas (U, 1947)** (b/w) **2.10 FILM: The Frozen North (U, 1922)** (b/w) **2.30 FILM: Green for Danger (PG, 1946)** British comedy thriller (b/w) **4.20** Kathy Kirby: My Story **6.00** Terminus. Short documentary (b/w) **6.35 FILM: Call Northside 777 (U, 1948)** Fact-based crime drama starring James Stewart, Helen Walker and Lee J Cobb (b/w) **9.00** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **9.05 FILM: The Puppet Masters (15, 1994)** Sci-fi horror starring Donald Sutherland **11.15** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **11.20 FILM: Attack Of The Lederhosen Zombies (15, 2016)** Horror comedy starring Laurie Calvert and Gabriela Marcinkova **12.55am** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **1.00 FILM: Tales from the Crypt (18, 1972)** Horror anthology **2.50** Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **2.55 FILM: Black Sunday (15, 1977)** Terrorist thriller **5.45** Christmas Carols in 1947

Film4

11.00am Marmaduke (U, 2010) Comedy with Lee Pace **12.45pm Shrek (U, 2001)** Animated comedy with the voice of Mike Myers (AD) **2.30 The Call of the Wild (PG, 2020)** Historical adventure starring Harrison Ford **4.30 The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (PG, 2010)** Fantasy adventure with Georgie Henley and Skandar Keynes (AD) **6.40 Mrs Doubtfire (12, 1993)** A divorced actor disguises himself to get a job looking after his own children. Comedy with Robin Williams, Sally Field and Pierce Brosnan (AD) **9.00 Upgrade (15, 2018)** A mugging victim in a wheelchair seeks revenge with the aid of a computer chip implant. Sci-fi thriller starring Logan Marshall-Green and Melanie Vallejo **11.00 Blood Simple (18, 1984)** A man's plot to murder his wife and her lover is ruined by a seedy private eye who sets off a horrific chain of events. Coen brothers thriller starring Frances McDormand. *See Viewing Guide* **12.55am-3.40 Memories of Murder (18, 2003)** Fact-based drama about a detective's search for Korea's first recorded serial killer. Starring Song Kang-ho and Kim Sang-gyeong

More4

8.55am Kirstie's Handmade Treasures **9.15** A Place in the Sun **11.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **1.10pm** Heir Hunters **3.10** Four in a Bed **5.55** Escape to the Château: DIY. The Strawbridges head to Saint-Malo (AD) **6.55** Escape to the Château. Angel has big plans for a vast attic in the château (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud meets an entrepreneur and his wife who are building a giant home on a plot in Lincolnshire (2/7) (AD) **9.00** 24 Hours in A&E. A 27-year-old is brought in after being thrown from his motorbike at speed, and treating a 10-month-old boy who was caught sucking on a bleach tablet (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. A 56-year-old woman is rushed to St George's with an open ankle fracture, and a man suffering chest pains looks back on his career on the railway (AD) **11.05** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special. Sean Lock and Bob Mortimer take on Jon Richardson and Lucy Beaumont **12.10am** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special **1.15** Emergency Helicopter Medics (AD) **2.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.20-3.50** Food Unwrapped (AD)

ITV2

6.00am Unwind with ITV **6.25** Love Bites (AD, SL) **7.20** Secret Crush (SL) **8.15** In for a Penny (AD) **9.15** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory (AD) **10.20 FILM: The Addams Family (PG, 2019)** Animated family comedy with the voices of Oscar Isaac and Charlize Theron **12.05pm FILM: The Lego Movie 2 — The Second Part (U, 2019)** Animated adventure featuring the voice of Chris Pratt **2.10** Family Fortunes: Celebrity Christmas Special **3.15** In for a Christmas Penny (AD) **4.00 FILM: Peter Pan (PG, 2003)** Fantasy adventure with Jeremy Sumpter and Rachel Hurd-Wood (AD) **6.15 FILM: Wonder Woman (12, 2017)** Fantasy adventure starring Gal Gadot (AD) **9.00 FILM: Bridesmaids (15, 2011)** Comedy starring Kristen Wiig and Rose Byrne (AD) **11.25** Family Guy. Meg goes on a Valentine's Day date with a guy she met online (AD) **11.55** Family Guy. Lois gets a cat (AD) **12.25am** Family Guy (AD) **12.55** American Dad! (AD) **1.50** Christmas Shopping with Keith Lemon **2.45** Hey Tracey! **3.40** Take Me Out **4.50** Love Bites (AD, SL) **5.45** Unwind with ITV

ITV3

6.00am Classic Coronation Street (AD) **7.00** Classic Emmerdale **8.05** That's My Boy **9.10** The Darling Buds of May **11.35** Heartbeat (AD) **1.40pm** Classic Emmerdale **2.15** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **3.50** A Touch of Frost. An autistic teenager is arrested for murder (AD) **6.00** Heartbeat. Forged banknotes circulate in Aidensfield. Gemma Craven guest stars (AD) **7.00** Heartbeat. A village newcomer is found battered to death in her own kitchen (AD) **8.00** Doc Martin. Mrs Tishell's young cousin joins her for some work experience (7/8) (AD) **9.00** Doc Martin. The medic rushes to Ruth's for a medical emergency (8/8) (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. Christmas special of the drama series set in the early 1950s (AD) **11.30 FILM: A Is for Acid (15, TVM, 2002)** The story of John George Haigh, a socialite who embarked on a killing spree that saw him labelled "the Acid Bath Murderer". Fact-based crime drama starring Martin Clunes **1.35am** An Audience with Bob Monkhouse. Recorded in 1994 **3.05** The Darling Buds of May **5.05** That's My Boy **5.55** Unwind with ITV

ITV4

6.00am River Monsters **6.25** The Champions **7.25** Cadfael **8.55** Magnum, PI **9.55** The Professionals (AD) **11.00** Minder (AD) **12.05pm** The Protectors **12.40** The Champions **1.45** River Monsters **2.45** Magnum, PI **3.50** The Professionals (AD) **4.50** Minder (AD) **6.00** River Monsters. Reports of a face-eating creature in a remote part of Bolivia **6.30** River Monsters. A colossal fish said to swallow men whole in South America **7.00** The Chase Celebrity Special. With Louise Hazel, Joel Dommett, Sinitta and Les Dennis **8.00** Junk and Disorderly. Henry, Allen and Guy finally take possession of the Buick Roadmaster **9.00** All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite. Hard-hitting action from the world of All Elite Wrestling **11.05 FILM: Rambo — First Blood Part II (15, 1985)** John Rambo returns to the jungles of Vietnam on a mission to rescue American PoWs and exact a violent revenge. Action adventure sequel with Sylvester Stallone (AD) **1.10am** Driving Force **3.00** Cadfael. Pilgrims are suspected of murder **4.25** The Champions **5.20** The Protectors (SL) **5.50** Unwind with ITV

Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.20** One Foot in the Grave **8.30** New Tricks (AD) **9.50** Classic Casualty **12.00** The Bill **1.00pm** Classic EastEnders **2.20** The Green Green Grass **4.45** Hi-de-Hi! Ted claims to have inside knowledge **6.05** Porridge. Christmas special from 1975. The inmates plan a Christmas escape (AD) **7.00** Porridge. Christmas special from 1976. Fletch is caught making booze in his cell (AD) **8.00** Jonathan Creek. Alan Davies' consulting detective returns to help an old acquaintance get to the bottom of a mystery from her past revolving around her family's home (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. The case of a zookeeper thought to have been killed by a tiger is reopened when evidence suggests the victim died before the big cat got to him (10/10) (AD) **11.00** Hustle. Mickey Bricks returns to London following his stint in Australia, and sets about ensnaring an obnoxious pair of property developers. Adrian Lester stars (1/6) **12.20am** Silent Witness. Traces of a possible nerve agent are found (AD) **2.40** A Place to Call Home **3.25** Birds of a Feather **4.00** Teleshopping

Yesterday

6.00am Impossible Railways (AD) **8.00** Top Gear (AD) **9.00** The World at War **10.00** War Factories **11.00** Great British Railway Journeys **12.00** Bangers and Cash **2.00pm** Great British Railway Journeys **4.00** The World at War **5.00** War Factories. How the Mitsubishi Zero was reduced to a kamikaze plane **6.00** Rise of the Nazis. The Night of the Long Knives in late June and early July of 1934 **7.00** Abandoned Engineering. Ruins of a vast industrial ghost town in the US, a windswept Scottish island and the remains of a resort in Japan that watched a city burn (3/12) (AD) **8.00** Inside the Christmas Factory. The factory processes and surprising history behind the nation's favourite festive treats **9.00** Bangers and Cash. Derek goes to collect two Bentleys with a majestic pedigree (6/8) **10.00** Bangers and Cash. Derek auctions off a Jensen Interceptor and a Jensen Healey (1/10) **11.00** Abandoned Engineering. A group of rusting ships stranded in a desert (1/8) (AD) **12.00** Top Gear (AD) **1.00am** Impossible Railways (AD) **3.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
As BBC1 except: **7.30pm** B&B by the Sea. The rugby star and presenter Ugo Monye checks in to a 19th-century Victorian villa **8.00** EastEnders. Janine and Mick prepare to get married (AD) **8.30-9.30** Celebrity MasterChef Christmas Cook-Off. Bez, Iwan Thomas, Josh Cuthbert and Lesley Garrett compete in the kitchen (1/2) (AD) **10.05-10.35** The Blame Game. Susie McCabe joins the regulars at the Strule Arts & Civic Centre in Omagh **11.15** The Cleaner. Wicky faces a blood-soaked crime scene in an ice-cream parlour (AD) **11.45** Two Doors Down Christmas Special. Christine surprises the neighbours with some uncharacteristic festive generosity. Last in the series. *See Viewing Guide* (AD) **12.15am-1.55** FILM: Last Christmas (2019) Romantic comedy starring Emilia Clarke and Henry Golding (AD)

BBC1 Scotland
As BBC1 except: **11.15pm** The Scotts. The family gathers for a festive party. Last in the series (r) **11.45** FILM: Last Christmas (2019) Romantic comedy starring Emilia Clarke (AD) **1.25am** The Hit List **2.10** Weather for the Week Ahead **2.15-6.00** BBC News

BBC2 N Ireland
As BBC2 except: **10.30pm** Sing! An Irish Christmas. A festive musical celebration with Keith and Kristyn Getty and their band (r) **11.30-1.15am** FILM: The Limehouse Golem (2016) Victorian-era thriller starring Bill Nighy, Douglas Booth and Olivia Cooke (AD)

STV
As ITV1 except: **10.15pm-10.30** STV News **3.00am-4.15** Night Vision

BBC Scotland
7.00pm The Seven **8.00** Scotland's Christmas Home of the Year (r) **9.00** My Old School **10.45** Still Game Christmas Special (r) (AD) **11.15** Sportscene: Premiership Highlights **11.45-12.00** Growing Up Scottish — Festive Special

BBC Alba
6.00am Alba Today **5.00pm** Leugh le Linda (r) **5.30** Sionnach agus Maigheach (Fox & Hare) (r) **5.40** CBeebies Panto 2022 (r) **5.50** Bing (r) **5.55** Stòiridh (r) **6.00** Donnie Murdo (Danger Mouse) (r) **6.25** Damhan & Durrag/Pipas & Douglas (r) **6.30** CBBC Panto 2022 (r) **6.35** Ronia, Nighean a' Mheirlich/Ronja, the Robber's Daughter (r) **7.00** An Là (News) **7.25** Ceilidh na Bliadhn' Uire 2021 (r) **7.30** Machair (r) **7.55** Dàn (r) **8.00** Mach as mo Rathad/Born to Drive (r) **8.30** Gàrraidhean Mòra na h-Alba (r) **9.00** Tatu Rioghail Dhun Eideann 2022. New series. Celebrating the return of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo **10.30** Aonghas Dubh/Ceol as na Briathran (r) **11.10** Tha Thu air Aigeann M'Inntinn (r) **11.15** The Cutter (r) **11.30** Belladrum (r) **12.00-6.00am** Alba Today

S4C
6.00am Cyw: Sali Mali (r) **6.05** Caru Canu a Stori (r) **6.15** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **6.30** Sam Tân (r) **6.40** Loti Borloti (r) **6.55** Nos Da Cyw **7.05** Pablo (r) **7.15** Fferm Fach (r) **7.30** Sion y Chef (r) **7.45** Byd Tad-Cu (r) **8.00** Ty Mêl (r) **8.10** Halibalw (r) **8.20** Y Brodyr Coala (r) **8.30** Gwdihw (r) **8.45** Guto Gwningen (r) **9.00** Ynys Broc Môr Lili (r) **9.10** Cei Bach (r) **9.25** Digbi Draig (r) **9.35** Oli Wyn (r) **9.45** Patrôl Pawennau (r) **10.00** Sali Mali (r) **10.05** Caru Canu a Stori (r) **10.15** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **10.30** Sam Tân (r) **10.40** Loti Borloti (r) **10.55** Nos Da Cyw (r) **11.05** Pablo (r) **11.15** Fferm Fach (r) **11.30** Sion y Chef (r) **11.45** Byd Tad-Cu (r) **12.00** News; Weather **12.05pm** Bwyd Epic Chris (r) (AD) **12.30** Heno (r) **1.00** Dim Byd i'w Wisgo (r) **1.30** Cerys Matthews a'r Goeden Faled (r) **2.00** News; Weather **2.05** Prynhawn Da **3.00** News; Weather **3.05** Chris a'r Afal Mawr (r) (AD) **4.00** Awr Fawr: Nos Da Cyw (r) **4.05** Guto Gwningen (r) **4.20** Fferm Fach (r) **4.35** Y Brodyr Coala (r) **4.45** Byd Tad-Cu (r) **5.00** Stwnsh: Sbargo (r) **5.05** Dathlu! **5.10** Y Goleudy (AD) **6.00** Ceffylau Cymru (r) **6.30** Rownd a Rownd (r) (AD) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News; Weather **8.00** Carol yr Wyl 2022 **8.55** News; Weather **9.00** Only Boys Aloud. The charity choir hosts a Christmas concert at Brecon Cathedral. Last in the series **10.00** Sgwrs Dan y Lloer. With guest Alex Jones (r) **11.00-12.05am** Radio Fa'ma (r) (AD)

MindGames

Backgammon Chris Bray

Christmas at 22lb

Baker Street was covered in snow and the Hansom cabs passed silently over its surface. Inside 22lb, Holmes and I had dined extremely well on Mrs Hudson's Christmas fare. As we relaxed with our glasses of port, we discussed the recent Diogenes Club tournament.

"For once, Holmes, I had the luck of the devil in the final match against Inspector Lestrade."

"I am sorry to have missed the dénouement, my dear Watson. Would you care to talk me through it?"

"Delighted, Holmes," I replied and, so saying, I set up the board to show the key position.

"You will note the cube is on 16 and so this game will decide the match. What is your estimate of my winning chances as Black, Holmes?"

"A small number, indeed," replied the great detective. "I would think somewhere around 4 or 5 per cent at the most."

"Spot on, and yet for once the smallest of chances came off. I rolled 21 and after hitting 24/23* I boldly played 8/6 with the two, reasoning that I would need to make my 6-pt to have any chance of winning."

"Accurate analysis, Watson, but having now seen the position, I am even more impressed with your victory."

"Why so?" I inquired with some asperity.

"As you have written many times, Watson, my profession requires minute attention to detail. Had you employed my methods I do not think you would have moved 24/23*, 8/6."

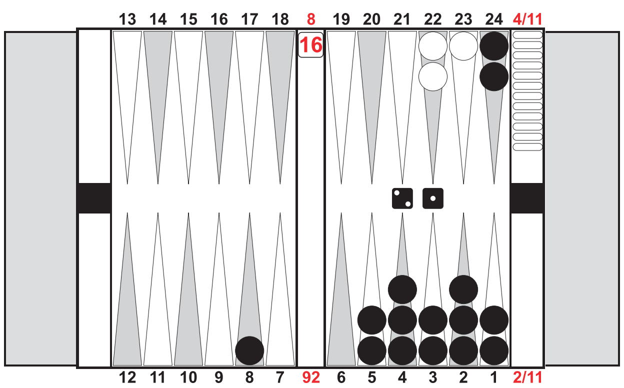
"Surely 24/23*/21 is no better?"

"Indeed not, but when you are faced with nearly insuperable odds you must look for every tiny advantage you can find. With that idea in mind, can you now find the best play?"

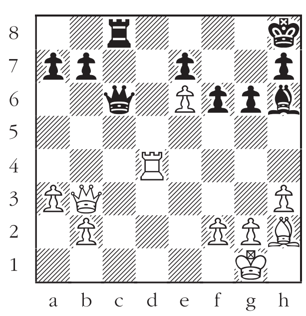
I mused for a few moments but then I saw what Holmes had seen in an instant.

"Good Lord, Holmes, now I see it. 24/23*, 3/1. If White now rolls 31 or 32, he must expose two blots in his home board."

"Well done, Watson. Once you see it, the move is obvious. The problem is in seeing the possibility in the first place. So, let us drink a toast to the backgammon gods who were kind enough to let you win, despite your oversight."



Winning Move



Black to play.
This position is from Dudzinski-Peyrer, chess.com 2022.

When there are major pieces (rooks and queens) on the board in a fairly simplified position, there is always the danger of a back rank mate for any king that cannot move up the board. Here the black king has g7 to move to if necessary but the white king is stuck on the back rank. Black can exploit this in two different ways. Can you find both?

Codeword No 4779

2	5	21	21	14	9	■	19	25	9	5	8	14
■	22	■	10	■	5	■	23	■	5	■	14	■
5	19	19	3	9	22	14	11	■	13	18	17	17
■	25	■	19	■	15	■	20	■	13	■	14	■
15	23	25	19	■	3	13	14	8	25	14	22	19
■	25	■	14	■	18	■	■	■	■	■	24	■
18	24	18	9	14	9	■	24	14	21	19	25	15
■	19	■	■	■	■	■	18	■	5	■	6	■
20	5	26	22	14	19	25	15	■	19	25	14	9
■	20	■	14	■	14	■	15	■	23 H	■	22	■
20	25	22	12	■	24	1	18	5	16 W	4	14	9
■	22	■	18	■	19	■	20	■	5 A	■	24	■
7	14	9	24	14	11	■	13	3	11	25	24	23

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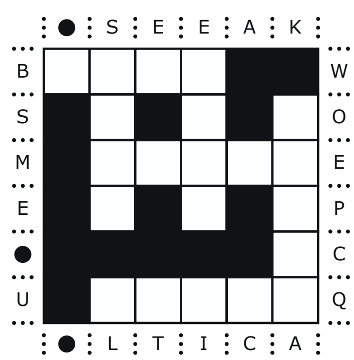
~~A~~ B C D E F G ~~H~~ I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V ~~W~~ X Y Z

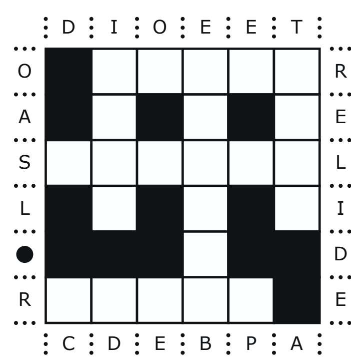
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				A								
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		W							H			

Every letter in this crossword-style grid has been substituted for a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

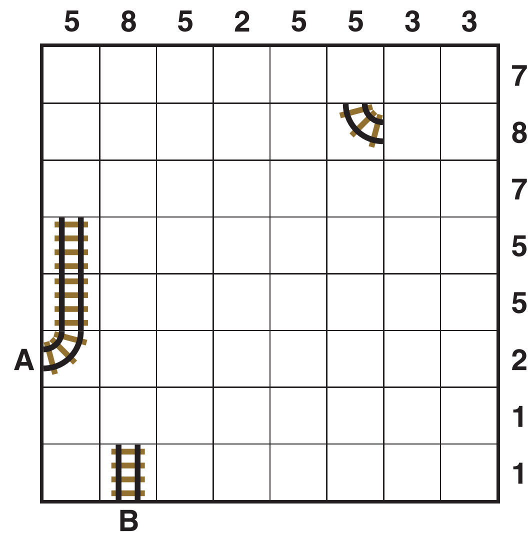
Lexica No 6669 No 6670





Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 1819

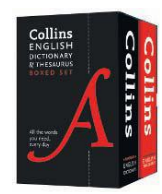


Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each row and column. There are only straight rails and curved rails. The track cannot cross itself.

Win a Dictionary & Thesaurus

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

(shaded)					3
1	3			5	
				2	5
5	4			(shaded)	
	5			3	1
2				(shaded)	



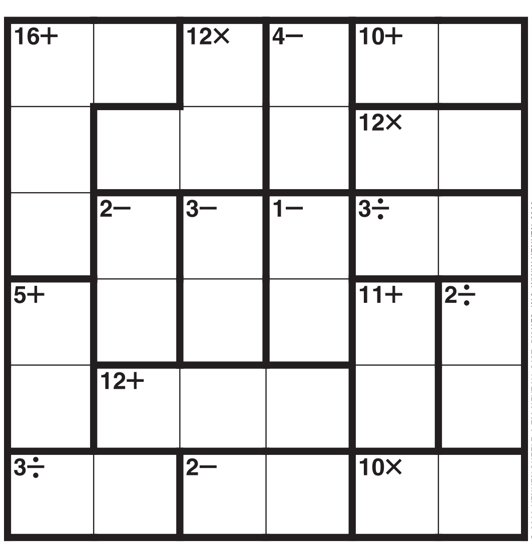
Winners will receive a *Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus*

Solve the puzzle and text in the numbers in the three shaded boxes. Text TIMES followed by a space, then your three numbers, eg, TIMES 123, plus your name, address and postcode to 64343 (UK only), by midnight. Or enter by phone. Call 09012 925274 (ROI 1516 303 501) by midnight. Leave your three answer numbers (in any order) and your contact details.

Calls cost £1 (ROI €1.50) plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. Winners will be picked at random from all correct answers received. One draw per week. Lines close at midnight tonight. If you call or text after this time you will not be entered but will still be charged. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

What are your favourite puzzles in MindGames? Email: puzzles@thetimes.co.uk

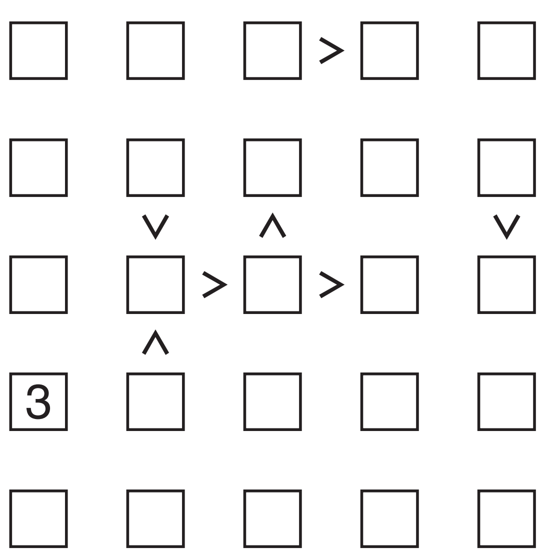
KenKen Difficult No 5771



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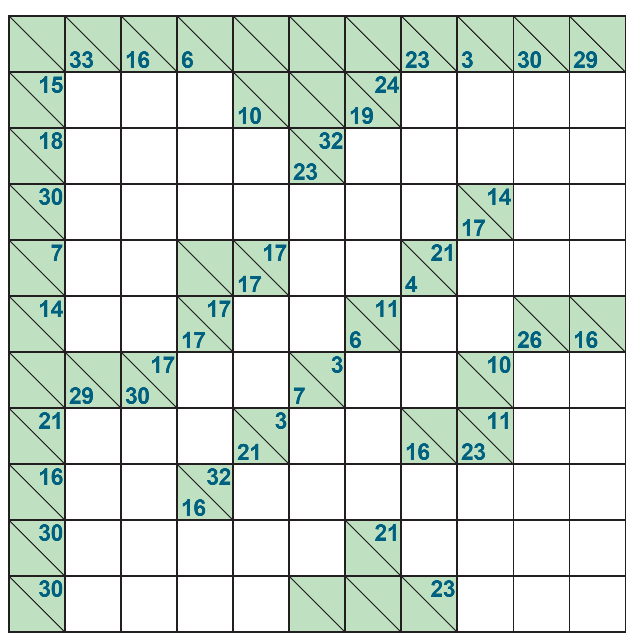
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 4375



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 3334

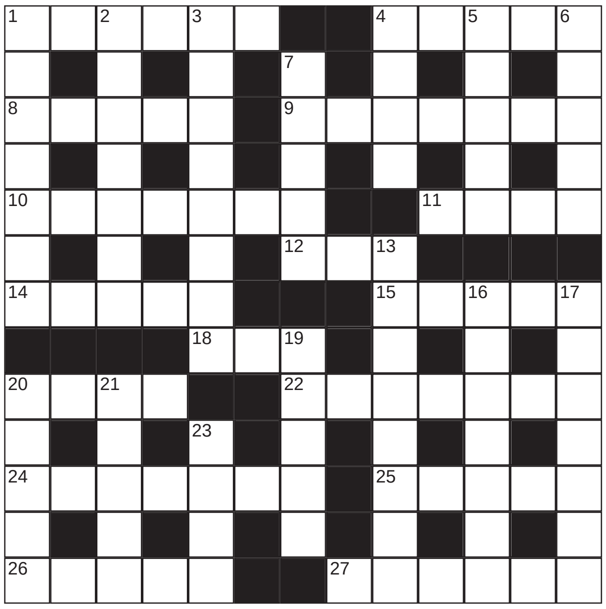


Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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MindGames

times2 Crossword No 9095



Across
1 Plain cotton cloth (6)
4 Causing laughter (5)
8 Autonomous machine (5)
9 Lift up (7)
10 Country; leather (7)
11 Choose, select (4)
12 Sleeping place (3)
14 Bracelet ornament (5)
15 Drive forward (5)
18 Sandbank; pub (3)
20 Audacious (4)
22 Exceptionally innocent (7)
24 Defensive wall (7)
25 Goodbye (5)
26 Sailing ship (5)
27 Banknote (6)

Down
1 Made of fired clay (7)
2 West African country (7)
3 Underground cemetery (8)
4 Musical pitch symbol (4)
5 City in Florida (5)
6 Office admin worker (5)
7 Discharge from army (5)
13 Shame, dishonour (8)
16 Motorcycle seat (7)
17 Varnish (7)
19 Storage frames (5)
20 Police officer (5)
21 Fragrant shrub (5)
23 Throw; players (4)

Solution to Crossword 9094

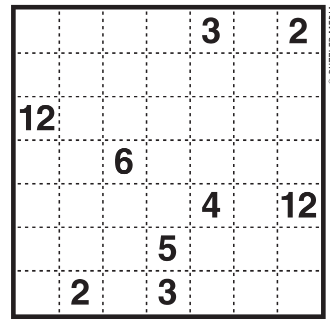


Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Brain Trainer

EASY	6	+5	x 3	+ 11	x 2	− 14	50% OF IT	+ 8	x 2	70% OF IT	ANSWER
MEDIUM	74	x 4	+ 76	+ ¼ OF IT	− 94	x 2	50% OF IT	+ 89	30% OF IT	+ 99	ANSWER
HARDER	138	x 3	+ 974	+ ½ OF IT	x 3	− 876	70% OF IT	+ 863	+ ½ OF IT	− 198	ANSWER

Cell Blocks No 4662



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

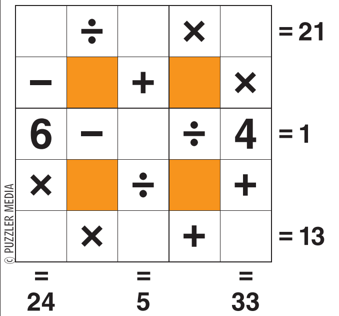
Polygon



From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 12 words, average; 17, good; 21, very good; 26, excellent

Yesterday's answers
earl, kale, kelp, lake, lapse, lark, lase, laser, leak, leap, pale, peal, pearl, plea, rale, real, sale, salep, salp, seal, sepal, skelp, slake, slap, sparkle, **sparkler**, splake

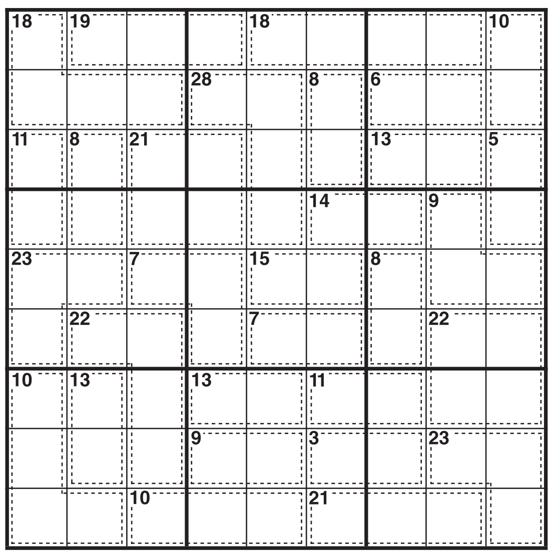
Set Square No 3337



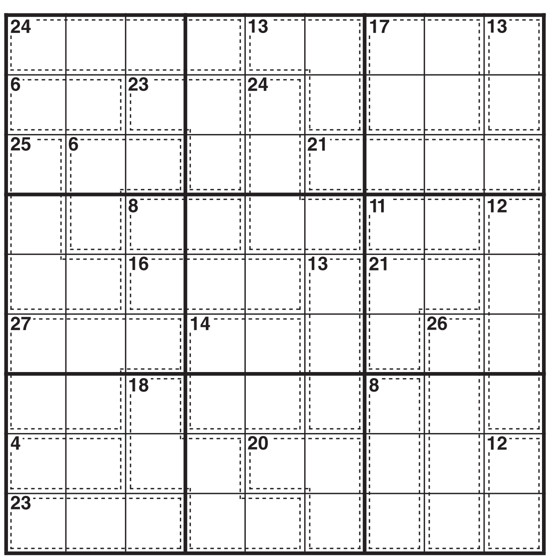
Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Killer Moderate No 8652



Killer Deadly No 8653



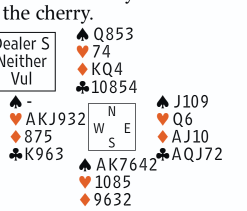
As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Similar ... but different (66)

When supporting an overcall, a pre-empt, or, frankly, almost any time you're bidding defensively (ie primarily to spoil), you should bid the level of the fit. Work out how many cards your partnership hold, and bid for that number of tricks. Do it immediately — no two bites of the cherry.



Bidding at Table One

S	W	N	E
2♠ (1)	3♥	4♠ (2)	Dbl(3)
End			

(1) Weak Two — a decent six-card suit and 5-10 pts.
(2) Yes — raising to the (ten-card) level of the fit.
(3) Stymied — can he chance a Five-level adventure?

West led ♥A v 4♠ doubled, following at trick two with ♥K, East playing ♥Q (note in passing that if East played ♥Q on the first round, she would be showing either ♥J, or that ♥Q was singleton, enabling partner to underlead ♥K). At trick three, West continued with ♥J — the best defence, aiming for a trump promotion. What should declarer do?

Correctly unwilling to ruff with dummy's ♠Q, promoting East's ♠J109, declarer cleverly discarded dummy's ♦4, East throwing an encouraging ♣7. West switched to ♣3 but declarer ruffed East's ♣A.

Declarer crossed to ♠Q (revealing the suspected 3-0 split) and returned to ♠A. Leaving East's ♠J out, she then led ♦2 to ♦Q. East won ♦A and led ♣2. Declarer ruffed, crossed to ♦K, led back to ♠K (drawing East's ♠J) and ruffed ♦6 (revealing the 3-3 split). She now ruffed ♣8, and scored the last trick with ♦9, the lucky 13th.

That loser-on-loser play at trick three had restricted her losses to one down — a meagre 100 points to E-W.

Bidding at Table Two

S	W	N	E
2♠	3♥	3♠ (1)	4♣(2)
Pass	4♠ (3)	Pass	5♦(3)
Pass	5NT(4)	Pass	7♣
End			

(1) "I can always bid 4♠ next time," ran North's faulty logic. The dreaded two bites of the cherry strategy is very dangerous — as North soon found out ...
(2) Happy to be able to introduce her suit at the Four-level (unlike at Table One).
(3) Control-showing bids agreeing clubs.
(4) Grand slam force — "bid Seven if you have two of the three top trump honours."

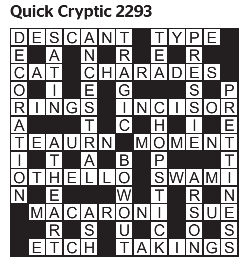
West led a hopeful ♠A v 7♣. Declarer (East) ruffed in dummy. The play was not too taxing. Declarer drew trumps and ran hearts, her 13 tricks consisting of six club tricks (including the spade ruff in dummy), six heart tricks and ♦A. E-W +1440.

All because North bid only 3♠, not the level-of-the-fit 4♠.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Solutions

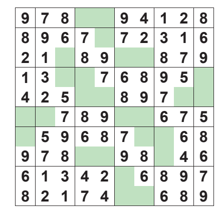
Quick Cryptic 2293



Codeword 4778



Kakuro 3333

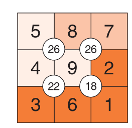


Sudoku 13,714

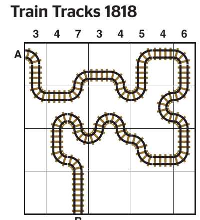
4	8	9	6	5	1	7	3	2
5	3	2	7	9	8	6	4	1
1	7	6	2	4	3	5	9	8
6	5	4	9	7	2	8	1	3
8	2	1	5	3	4	9	6	7
3	9	7	8	1	6	2	5	4
2	6	3	1	8	5	4	7	9
9	1	5	4	2	7	3	8	6
7	4	8	3	6	9	1	2	5

Quintagram
1 Inn
2 Clause
3 St Louis
4 Vacation
5 Actually

Suko 3680



Train Tracks 1818

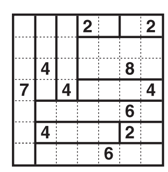


Brain Trainer
Easy 63; Medium 237; Harder 6,735

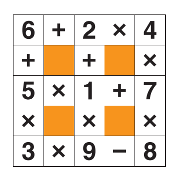
Sudoku 13,715

6	2	3	8	7	9	5	4	1
9	5	7	4	1	3	8	6	2
8	1	4	2	6	5	7	3	9
5	6	1	7	2	8	3	9	4
7	8	9	3	4	1	6	2	5
3	4	2	5	9	6	1	8	7
4	7	5	6	8	2	9	1	3
1	3	8	9	5	4	2	7	6
2	9	6	1	3	7	4	5	8

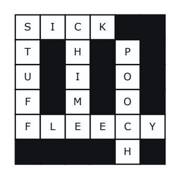
Cell Blocks 4661



Set Square 3336



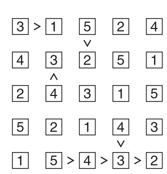
Lexica 6667



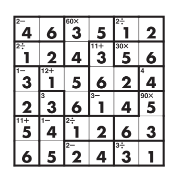
Sudoku 13,716

4	5	1	9	3	7	6	2	8
6	9	3	2	8	1	7	4	5
8	2	7	6	4	5	1	9	3
1	6	4	3	5	9	2	8	7
2	3	9	7	6	8	5	1	4
5	7	8	4	1	2	9	3	6
7	8	6	1	2	4	3	5	9
3	4	2	5	9	6	8	7	1
9	1	5	8	7	3	4	6	2

Futoshiki 4374



KenKen 5770



Lexica 6668



Killer 8650

7	5	9	3	2	8	6	1	4
3	8	4	9	6	1	7	5	2
6	1	2	7	5	4	3	8	9
8	3	5	6	7	9	4	2	1
1	9	7	5	4	2	8	3	6
2	4	6	1	8	3	5	9	7
4	7	3	2	1	5	9	6	8
9	6	1	8	3	7	2	4	5
5	2	8	4	9	6	1	7	3

Tetonor 320

99	53	300	34
11 x 9	5 + 48	50 x 6	8 + 26
35	100	28	196
23 + 12	50 x 2	14 + 14	14 x 14
240	20	276	56
48 x 5	4 + 16	12 x 23	6 + 50
20	208	52	64
11 + 9	8 x 26	2 + 50	16 x 4

Word watch
Ronggeng (a) A Malay dance (*Collins*)
Miliaria (a) Prickly heat (*Chambers*)
Penuche (c) A fudge-like sweet (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

Black's winning moves involve exploitation of White's weak back rank. 1 ... Qxe6! (2 Qxe6 Rc1+ leads to mate) leaves White without a decent reply as ... Rc1+ is coming. The other win is 1 ... Qb6! (2 Qxb6 Rc1+ leads to mate) when the threats of 2 ... Qxb3, 2 ... Qxd4 and 2 ... Rc1+ are decisive

Killer 8651

9	4	7	6	8	1	2	5	3
3	1	2	5	4	7	6	8	9
8	5	6	3	2	9	4	1	7
4	3	8	2	7	6	1	9	5
7	6	1	8	9	5	3	4	2
5	2	9	4	1	3	8	7	6
2	8	3	7	5	4	9	6	1
1	7	4	9	6	2	5	3	8
6	9	5	1	3	8	7	2	4

Quiz
1 Eurovision Song Contest **2** Ballet **3** White **4** Dynamite **5** Charles I **6** *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* **7** Frog **8** Antarctica **9** Elizabeth Taylor **10** War Office **11** Northampton **12** Caprivi Strip, named after Count Leo von Caprivi **13** Hebru Brantley **14** Nick Faldo — in 1989 **15** Richard Attenborough or Lord Attenborough

THE TIMES

MindGames

23.12.22

Word watch
David Parfitt

Ronggeng
a A Malay dance
b A unit of radiation
c A ne'er-do-well

Miliaria
a Prickly heat
b A Roman barracks
c A genus of multi-legged arthropods

Penuche
a A point-scoring card game
b Style, flair
c A fudge-like sweet

Answers on page 11

Sudoku

Mild No 13,717

					4			2
	4		2			9	6	
5		6	7				4	
6	8		9					1
		1						
2					7	4	8	
		2		7		3		
8					1		9	
1	5		4		8	7		

Difficult No 13,718

			2				5	
		3	9		7			8
	2					6	3	
4	8						2	6
						8		
	9					1	7	
		5		6	3		1	
2		8	5		4	7		
	3		7					

Fiendish No 13,719

							1	
			5		6			
				8	2	7		
	9						3	7
		6			4	8		
	8	5		7				1
		1		5			2	3
4			2			1	7	
			3		1	5		

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Katrina and the Waves's *Love Shine a Light* (1997) was the last UK entry to win which annual event?

2 Romantic and classical are types of tutu worn by female performers of which dance?

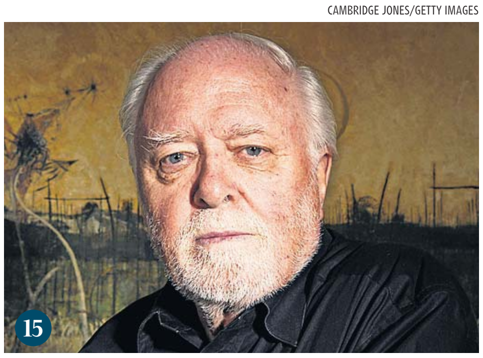
3 What colour is the central vertical stripe on the national flag of Italy?

4 Which explosive was patented by Alfred Nobel in 1867?

5 The Bishops' Wars (1639 and 40) in Scotland were sparked by which king's religious reforms?

6 *Life, the Universe and Everything* (1982) is the third novel in which series by Douglas Adams?

CAMBRIDGE JONES/GETTY IMAGES



7 The Chinese Indonesian dish known as swikee contains the legs of which amphibian?

8 King Edward VII Land is a peninsula on which continent?

9 In 1976, which London-born film star married John Warner, a future senator for Virginia?

10 Which government department was responsible for the British Army's administration between 1857 and 1964?

11 In which town were the composers Malcolm Arnold, Edmund Rubbra and William Alwyn born?

12 Which "strip", a 450km-long panhandle of Namibia, is named after a German imperial chancellor?

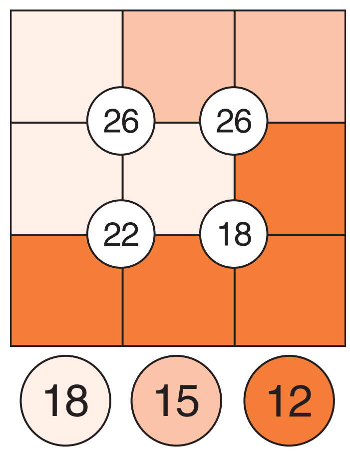
13 The comic-style mixed media paintings of which US artist centre on his characters Flyboy and Lil Mama?

14 Who was the first English golfer to win the Masters?

15 Which film director and actor (1923-2014) is pictured?

Answers on page 11

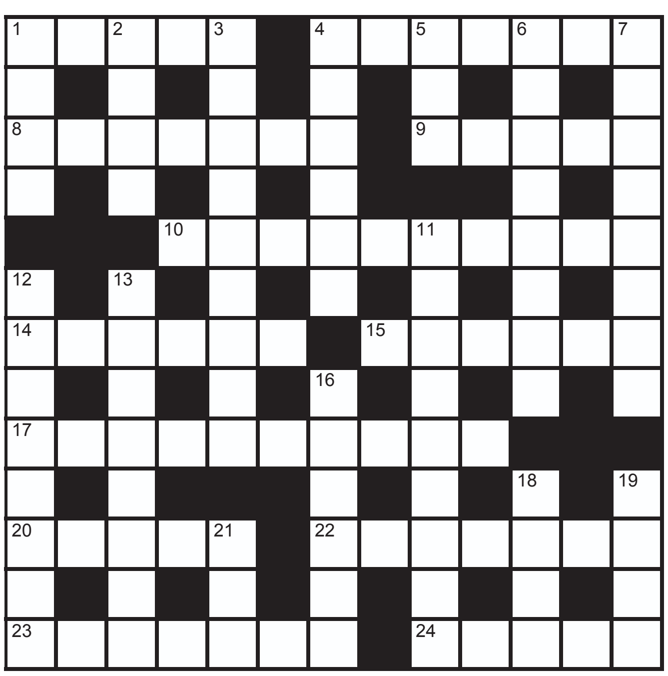
Suko No 3680



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.co.uk

The Times Quick Cryptic No 2294 by Felix



Across
1 Blessed person rested outside home (5)
4 Athletics event broadcast live in first month (7)
8 Endless hope provided by fashionable pain reliever (7)
9 The Greens, perhaps, making comeback in Caerwys, N Wales (5)
10 Bouncer employed for rallies? (6,4)
14 Cheers Yankee crossing globe, arriving at Devon council (6)
15 Rapidly acquire coat for Kate, caught in shower? (4,2)
17 Results coming from refurbished state venue (10)
20 Not up for finishing off sauce boat (5)
22 What long-ruling monarch is in bronze in (old-fashioned) Asian capital? (7)
23 A random eccentric, one fixing potholes? (7)
24 Chaplain bringing a doctor into gym (5)

Yesterday's solution on page 11

Down
1 Celebrity's debut curtailed (4)
2 Mischief-makers: one thousand, what's more ... (4)
3 Theatre PR resolved to produce description of trilogy (5-4)
4 Girl, not quite ten, chasing approval from German ... (6)
5 ... and another the ladies maybe upset? (3)
6 Legislator's work ultimately to stop malware spreading (8)
7 Small bird taking shelter (8)
11 Steps into small joint to find long-distance traveller? (9)
12 Treks are arranged for dashing fellow with nothing on? (8)
13 After golf, re-enter briefly with a drink (5,3)
16 Cutting a new sort of woollen cloth (6)
18 One with a degree of partially smug radicalism, (4)
19 In the past I must have caught cold (4)
21 That fellow greeting mayor at the front (3)*



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